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A TREATISE

ON THE

24th AND 25th CHAPTERS OF MATTHEW,

SHOWING

THE FULFILMENT OF MOST OF THE PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST,
BY COPIOUS EXTRACTS FROM HISTORY; CONSEQUENTLY,
THAT THE GENTILE TIMES ARE NEARLY ENDED,
AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD SOON TO COME.

BY

soac
I. C. WELLCOME.

HALLOWELL, MAINE.

Second Edition.

"The entrance of thy word giveth light." — DAVID.

"My word shall judge you in the last day." — JESUS.

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P R E F A C E .

IN putting forth this little work, the author does not presume to have wisdom above *all* others, nor does he pretend to great historical attainments ; but, as this last public discourse of our Lord contains much information of the greatest importance to his church, and as it is clearly manifest that this portion of Scripture has been greatly perverted to serve sectarian purposes, and thereby been shrouded in the mantle of error, so that many inquirers after truth remark that these are the darkest portions of the Gospel, — he has thought best to use the means in his reach to remove the *shroud*, and compare the predictions with facts that are found on the pages of history, and thus trace the fulfilment of the words of Christ. In doing this, many very important extracts are quoted from various well-authenticated histories, which in themselves are of more value to the Bible student than the cost of the book. It is believed by the author that, when a full investigation of this subject is had, it will awaken a greater interest in the study of the Scriptures generally, and thus light and truth will increase ; and this has been his sole object in presenting his treatise ; for where light and truth prevail, God is

honored, his creatures humbled, and sinners are brought to Christ, and prepared for the new era which is about to open upon us with all its glorious realities.

I would here say that I am indebted to Elders E. R. Pinney, J. Litch, and several other brethren, for some of the historical facts quoted in this work, and also for some of the phraseology in which ideas are clothed; where I found my own ideas expressed in terms which suited my mind, I in some few instances used them.

I. C. W

INTRODUCTION.

THE faithful and candid study of the Scriptures is no ordinary matter. To obtain a correct understanding of them, they must be faithfully and prayerfully examined, and also compared with other known facts, and the different topics treated upon separated from each other, and applied to the times and things intended. Then may we obtain the mind of Christ. He who searches the word of God only to find a set of texts to favor or to prove his own views of things, makes a bad use of the lamp which God has furnished to be "a light to our path." It is not given to enlighten us by perverting it to guide us in our own ways ; but it is to show us the "path of righteousness," the "strait and narrow way that leads to life," and open up before us "the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

To learn what they teach, we must "search the Scriptures," and also "give attendance to reading" and "to doctrine," and "take heed to the doctrine," remembering that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." In order for us to be profited by studying the Scriptures, we must consider not only *by* whom they were spoken, but *to* whom, at *what time*, with what *object*, under what circumstances, and in what connection. The discourse of our Lord, which we are now

about to examine, furnishes the most interesting and important chain of ideas to be found in the Bible ; predicting the severest political ruptures, the sorest physical diseases, the most perplexing social disturbances and barbarity of civilized communities, the fatal overthrow of a mighty nation, the great affliction and unparalleled distress of the church, and its release by a merciful God, the great dangers to which it is exposed by corrupt teachers, also the signs of the last days, and the final end of mortal life, with the introduction of the kingdom of God. These are subjects of no ordinary magnitude.

Who that has any love for his own kindred, that desires to learn the history of his ancestry, his own origin, and to inquire into the character of the vicissitudes attending his lineage, and search for his title to an undivided estate ;— who that loves to trace the rise, progress and fall, of races and nations, to mark the mysterious workings of Providence in their history ;— who that loves to study the cause and trace the effect, to investigate natural and mental philosophy, and that loves the AUTHOR OF THE UNIVERSE, does not wish to know all that may be known of the history of the Church of God ? Surely the study of the origin, the character, the dangers, the various vicissitudes, the merciful deliverances, the royal lineage, and the time of final triumph and coronation, in *their* rightful inheritance, is more worthy of our arduous study, and constant thoughtful meditation, than all the other themes put together.

“O, how love I thy law ! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me.” — Psalm 119 : 97, 98.

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TREATISE.

MATT. 24: 3.—“And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” These questions are simple and plain. All can easily see what is involved in them. Though simple, and expressed in so few words, they comprehend much of great importance, and if answered by our Lord, those answers contain information invaluable to the church of God.

Jesus, our Lord, had clearly proved himself the friend of sinners, and had for more than three years taught the Jews his Gospel, and wrought miracles among them to prove to them that he was their Messiah. He had sent out servants to call them to repentance, and to announce to them that “the kingdom of heaven was at hand.” They did their work, and he followed them “over the cities of Israel,” until his time had come to make a more full manifestation of his royal lineage, and of the corrupt character of that nation who claimed to be the

church of God, and to look for a king from heaven. To do this he next goes up to Jerusalem, in fulfilment of a prophecy in Isa. 62 : 11 — “ Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ;” and to another, in Zech. 9 : 9 — “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,” &c. His disciples are in great expectation, supposing that the kingdom was now to be established, which had been subverted and destroyed in the days of Zedekiah.—Ezek. 21 : 25. As he draws near the city, he takes this opportunity to correct their error, and puts forth a parable to represent the truth about the kingdom, “ Because he was nigh unto Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear. And he said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.” This parable, as many others also, illustrates the fact which is clearly stated in John 14 : 1-3 — “ I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

He enters Jerusalem amid the shouts of the multitude who followed him, crying, “ Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest !” This displeased the Pharisees. Jesus drove the speculators from the temple, and began to teach the throng that attended him, by parables and

otherwise, that the Jews were the enemies of God, as a nation — had occupied the vineyard of God, and refused to render the fruits thereof — had killed the prophets of God, and would also kill his Son. In explaining, he says: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." — Matt. 21: 43. In Matthew, 22d and 23d chapters, Jesus gives the Jews a detailed account of their wickedness, and pronounces their doom, as a nation, in these words: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus close the instructions of Christ to a rebellious nation. Their judgment is determined, the sentence pronounced. *Here their national dispensation ENDED.* Jesus leaves the temple, accompanied by his disciples, whose sympathies seem to be awakened for so beautiful a situation, which is to be desolated. "And his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple," as though they would excite his compassion for such grandeur. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Their case is decided, their doom is sealed, their sentence declared, and there was no revoking it. The time had been when they could have avoided this evil, as proved by the following remark: "And when he (Jesus) was come near, he beheld the city,

and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the TIME of thy visitation."— Luke 19: 41–44. All these sayings, and many others, had been heard, and carefully marked by the disciples, together with the final sentence on the temple. Jesus now wended his way to that retired, yet frequented spot, "the Mount of Olives,"—a hallowed place. The disciples followed him, musing in their hearts on what had been said at the temple. They arrive at the resting-place on Olivet; they want more information respecting these things. So they ask privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

The circumstances above mentioned gave rise to these questions. The answers to them were given, not to be kept private; but they are written for our instruction by the Evangelists in Matt. 24th and 25th, Mark 13th, and Luke 21st; each of these three evangelists recording the same discourse.

We now propose to examine this discourse in connection with facts of history, of events that

have since occurred in fulfilment of the statements of Christ in this discourse.

A number of predictions of the prophets, with which these Jewish disciples were evidently familiar, and which related to events involved in Christ's remarks (see Deut. 28 : 49, 53 ; Lev. 26 : 29, 33 ; Jer. 25 : 17, 18 ; Dan. 9 : 26, and Isa. 59 : 20 ; Hag. 2 : 6, 7), seem to have been associated together by them, as though they were to transpire at the same time. This appears by the association of such distant events in their questions.

Verse 4.—“ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.” Jesus knew the human heart, and the multitudes of impostors that would arise and impose their deceptive ideas upon his disciples. He knew all that would follow to beguile and allure his church from the truth.

Verse 5.—“ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.” Such had been the general expectation, by the Jews, of the appearance of a Messiah, it had induced many corrupt, ambitious persons to set up this claim, “ saying, I am Christ,” to carry out their selfish designs. But only one of this class is noted in history as having appeared prior to Jerusalem's overthrow. Josephus records one ; but he can scarcely be reckoned a false Messiah. It is not difficult to see, by the current of this discourse, that Jesus is predicting events to occur in consecutive order, during the

whole Gentile dispensation, by which he disconnects the events of his disciples' two questions (in Luke 21 : 24, 25, it is clearly stated). Thus he passes directly over the event of Jerusalem's destruction, giving only a passing remark on it in verse 6, and proceeds to give a synopsis of events to the end of the world. Notice the language : "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ." Only one is mentioned before Jerusalem was destroyed. If he were truly a false Christ, it does not fill the prediction. *Mark*, he says, "MANY shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive MANY." I shall now quote from "*Buck's Theological Dictionary*" a list of the false Christs, as they have risen during the Gospel age, in fulfilment of our Lord's prediction. "The first was Caziba, in the beginning of the second century. In his career the Jews followed him as their Messiah, until the civil arm dispersed them, by destroying 600,000 Jews.

"2d. Moses Cretensis, A. D. 434.

"3d. Dunaan, A. D. 520.

"4th. Julian, A. D. 529.

"5th. Mahomed, A. D. 571. He first professed to be Messiah.

"6th. Serenus, A. D. 721, of Spain.

"7th. A. D. 1137. One in France.

"8th. A. D. 1138. One in Persia.

"9th. A. D. 1157. One in Spain.

"10th. A. D. 1167. One in Arabia.

"11th. A. D. 1167. Another in Arabia.

- “12th. Not long after, a third in Arabia.
“13th. A. D. 1174. One in Persia.
“14th. A. D. 1176. One in Moravia.
“15th. A. D. 1199. One David el David.
“16th. A. D. 1497. One.
“17th. A. D. 1500. One.
“18th. A. D. 1509. One.
“19th. A. D. 1534. One.
“20th. A. D. 1615. One.
“21st. A. D. 1624. One.
“22d. A. D. 1666. One.
“23d. A. D. 1666. Another.
“24th. A. D. 1682. One Rabbi Mordechai,
of Germany.”

Thus, we have a record of twenty-four false Christs during about thirteen hundred years of the Gospel age, deceiving multitudes of the Jews, and one, Mahomed, led away large numbers of nominal Christians.

Verse 6.—“And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” The first of these wars resulted in the destruction of many cities in the land of Judah, by the Romans, and finally of Jerusalem itself, to fulfil God’s prediction and judgment. — Deut. 28 : 49, 53 ; also, Jer. 25 : 18.

Verse 7.—“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” It should be remembered that when Christ predicted this, and for three hundred years after, the nations of earth were combined in one universal

empire. Rome, and the wars during that period, were not of "kingdom against kingdom," but of internal rebellions and civil commotions. Rome retained universal dominion, as symbolized by the fourth beast of Dan. 7: 7-19, from B. C. 30 to A. D. 356. From this time onward the barbarous tribes of northern regions invaded western Rome, broke up the empire, and established sectional kingdoms (symbolized by the ten horns of the above-named beast); these warred one against another, by reason of which, three of these kingdoms were plucked up for the permanent establishment of Popery. This was nearly five hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem. "And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." It is not a little strange that men of good sense, of candor, and well read, can crowd all the above predicted events, in their fulfilment, into a space of about thirty-six years, which intervened the time of their prediction and Jerusalem's overthrow; while the history of that time furnishes no record of such events having taken place, but gives facts in abundance which exclude the possibility of such an idea being correct. But such is the power of creeds established on false basis, that facts are not weighed at all while the mind is blinded. I shall here give a list of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, which have scourged the human race in fulfilment of verse seven. I quote from a work of *Noah Webster*, LL.D., published A. D. 1799.

“By famine and sword 580,000 Jews were destroyed between A. D. 96 and A. D. 180.

“In Antioch, from A. D. 96 to A. D. 180, earthquakes destroyed 13 cities and over 100,000 lives.

“In Rome, A. D. 169, pestilence destroyed 10,000 daily.

“In Rome, A. D. 187, pestilence appeared and continued three years.

“In London, A. D. 310, by famine 40,000 died.

“In A. D. 446, Sept. 17th, an earthquake shook down the walls of Constantinople, and 57 towers fell.

“In Rome, A. D. 539, in one district 50,000 died.

“In Antioch, A. D. 588, an earthquake killed 60,000.

“In A. D. 590, the plague killed 10,000 daily in Turkey.

“In A. D. 679, a severe famine in England three years.

“In A. D. 717, in Constantinople, 300,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1005, earthquakes three months, followed by pestilence, by which it is said one third of the human race died.

“In A. D. 1077, in Constantinople, so many died by plague and famine, the living could not bury them.

“In A. D. 1124, in Italy, there was such famine that the dead lay in the streets not

buried; and in England one third of the people died of plague.

“In A. D. 1294, in England thousands died of famine.

“In A. D. 1345, in London, 50,000 died of plague and famine, and were buried in one grave-yard; in Norwich, 50,000; in Venice, 100,000; in Florence, 100,000; in eastern nations, 20,000,000. It was called the black death.

“In A. D. 1352, in China, 900,000 died of famine.

“In A. D. 1450, in Milan, 60,000 died of famine.

“In A. D. 1611, in Constantinople, 200,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1625, in London, 35,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1626, in Lyons, 600,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1665, in London, 68,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1755, in the East, an earthquake destroyed the city of Lisbon, killing 50,000. In Mitelene and archipelago it shook down 2,000 houses. It shook all the Spanish coast. The plague followed, which destroyed 150,000 lives in Constantinople.” This earthquake is supposed by many to mark the opening of the sixth seal of Rev. 6 : 12.

Thus we have the fulfilment of events which Jesus said, 8th verse, would be “the beginning

of sorrows." Who can doubt the fulfilment of every jot and tittle of all Christ's words as literally as these have been, with such facts before him?

Verses 9-11.— "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake; and then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

Here, again, we find prophecy of events stretching far beyond the days of the immediate disciples of Christ. "THEN," at the time when wars begin to put the world in commotion, breaking up the Roman empire, multiplying "nations and kingdoms" to fight "against kingdoms;" when pestilence, famine and earthquake, have entered upon their work of devouring the nations, and distressing the saints, who have been begotten by the word of truth, now, in "many nations."

It must be a time of nations, or the saints could not "be hated by all nations." It could not mean that the Jews would be thus hated, for they were never "hated for Jesus' sake." The Jews hated Jesus the Messiah.

Some apply this to the hatred shown the apostles; yet they were not in "all nations," nor "hated by all nations." And, although they were brought before councils, and governors, and some of them killed, yet they did not "hate one

another," nor "betray one another," but the reverse was said of them: "See how these Christians love one another!" We remark, then, that *this* "delivering up" of the saints for Jesus' sake must refer to the work of the great apostacy, which came on and ripened from the days of Constantine the Great, to those of Justinian; mentioned by Paul, 2 Thess. 2: 3, as the "falling away" to prepare the way for the "man of sin." This was accomplished by the church becoming so corrupt as to turn from God's protection to that of civil government. At different stages of this apostacy we find attempts frequently made by Bishops of Rome to become supreme head over all Christian churches in all nations.

Ecclesiastical corruptions and superstitions increased rapidly, until the Bishop of Rome held the controlling influence over the bishops and clergy of most countries.

But there being large classes of dissenters in the various countries, called Arians, Eutychians, etc., his attempts were withstood for a time, and his ambitious purposes checked. Constantine had given the church a very exalted position in government; but dissensions had humbled it until the death of Anastasius, an Arian emperor. Subsequently, Justin, a zealous Catholic, came to the throne, and by his influence and power the Bishop of Rome obtained a stronger hold of the ecclesiastical reins than ever before. Justin and the bishop united in using all their

influence and intrigues to bring all men to submit to the creed of Chalcedon; for, during a long series of years, the church had suffered much from heresy on the one hand, and tyranny on the other. Councils had been often assembled, debates held, quarrels arisen, and hatred and strife engendered, both on points of doctrine, and the power of bishops. The pure and devoted disciples of Jesus remonstrated,—they exhorted, refused to countenance the corruptions of the bishops. This time is spoken of in Dan. 11 : 32, 33 — “ But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.” How much like the words of Christ in verses 9 and 10! — “ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” Justin issued edicts, in his time, requiring all the bishops, clergy and laity, in his dominion in the East, to obey the mandates of the Pope in the West, on pain of confiscation of goods, of being deposed from office, deprived the rights of citizens, and finally to be banished. Many submitted; but others refused stoutly, and chose to die in obedience to God, rather than to be governed by a corrupt priest. Justinian succeeds Justin in the empire, A. D. 527. He is also a vassal of the

Roman church, and unites all his interest with that of the Pope; and to effect the desired end he issues an edict, A. D. 533, in which he decrees that the Pope of Rome is "head of all the churches, and true and effective CORRECTOR OF HERETICS." Justinian also sends a letter to Rome, couched in these words:

"Justinian, pious, fortunate, renowned, triumphant, emperor, consul, etc., to John, the most holy Archbishop of our city of Rome, and Patriarch, rendering honor to the Apostolic chair, and to your Holiness, as has been always, and is our wish, and honoring your blessedness as a father, we have hastened to bring to the knowledge of your holiness all matters relating to the state of the churches. It having been at all times our great desire to preserve the unity of your apostolic chair, and the constitution of the holy churches of God, which has obtained hitherto, and still obtains: *Therefore, we have made no delay in subjecting and uniting to your Holiness all the priests of the whole East.*

"For this reason we have thought fit to bring to your notice the present matters of disturbance, though they are manifest and unquestionable, and always firmly held and declared by the whole priesthood, according to the doctrine of your apostolic chair. For we cannot suffer that anything which relates to the state of the church, however manifest and unquestionable, should be moved without the knowledge of your Holiness,

who are THE HEAD OF ALL THE CHURCHES; for in all things we have already declared we are anxious to increase the honor and authority of your apostolic chair." — *Croly on the Apoc.*, pp. 114, 115.

Here, then, we find the humble followers of Christ, who are among the mass of Christendom, delivered up to obey the corrupt dogmas of the Pope, or to be killed if they refused. All who know anything of the history of the church, know something of the martyrdom, the bloodshed that followed the long night of darkness and persecution that rested on the saints.

In a few years from the above date and the Pope actually has universal authority over all the churches; but some escape his tyranny by fleeing into the wilderness, as noticed in Rev. 12: 6-14.

The usurpation was general over all nations where Christianity had obtained. Consequently, all who obeyed Christ rather than the apostate government church, were "hated by all nations," and also delivered over by the priests to the civil arm to be "killed." These party strifes led to "betraying one another, and hating one another," as the history of papacy abundantly testifies (and such work is not yet finished). Parents betraying children, and children betraying parents, the sister the brother, and the brother the sister, the wife the husband, and the husband the wife, has been a feature of the papal system from the beginning. In the

sixteenth century a check was put upon this "mystery of iniquity," by the Reformation, and such terrible scenes of barbarism are less frequent. But the breaking of the universal power of Rome to dictate in doctrines, opened the way for the universal spread of the Gospel, and also gave license to other false teachers. Thus Jesus said :

Verse 11.—“ And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.”

The word prophet does not always signify one who foretells future events, but often signifies a religious teacher, an instructor. It is true that false religious teachers have existed in all ages. There were numbers of them in the first century of Christianity. The Romish priesthood has furnished a large class of false teachers, and they have certainly “deceived many.” It will not be denied that multitudes of false teachers have also risen under the Protestant name, and the truths of the Gospel have been distorted, corrupted, and their value destroyed to such a degree, that MANY, VERY MANY have been, and are being, DECEIVED. The errors of all former centuries, together with those imbibed by the superior inventions of the last hundred and fifty years, being retailed out to a liberal-minded age, have given license, in one form or another, to all forms of sins ; so that licentiousness and debauchery are nearly as common in Christendom as in heathen lands ; and professed Christians are nearly as often engaged in practices of

iniquity as others. Such is the fruit of flagrant errors. Jesus has told us the results of these false teachers.

Verse 12.—“And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold.”

The “many false teachers” produces this coldness of love in the church. “Evil communications corrupt good morals,” says Paul. “Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you,” says Peter. It should not be thought that no reference is had in the text to false teachers of this generation; for it is clearly manifest that reference is specially had to false teachers of fundamental religious errors in the last part of the Gospel dispensation, which would turn the hearts of men “from the truth unto fables,” causing “iniquity to abound” thereby, and “the love of many to wax cold.” Soon after the papal yoke was broken from the neck of the disciples, and men began to step from the dark chambers of Babylon, and the light of the blessed Gospel of God began to shine, Satan took a new position. All Christendom could no longer be shut up to the superstitious creeds of Rome. Men began to think, study, believe, and act for themselves; and having been so long covered in darkness, many made strange strides. As the word of God could no longer be kept from men, Satan stood ready to assist in interpreting and explaining it away. Consequently, during the eighteenth century, the systems of spiritualism which reject the personal reign of Christ in

the millennium,—which reject the personal second advent of Christ, the personal existence of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the renewal of the earth, the future punishment of the wicked,—have taken deep root in the professed Christian church, introducing their train of wild, extravagant, speculative, unscriptural notions, resulting in the loss of the hope of the Gospel by the mass; and for it they cherish other hopes that do not purify the heart and make it better, do not lead to self-denial and godliness, to love of righteousness and of the word of God. There is an abundance of religious show, such as Paul describes in 2 Tim. 3 : 1–8, and many other scriptures. But it has not repaired the breach in the wall; it has not kept in check the bad passions of the human heart, and healed the fountains of sin. No; but it has often hoisted the flood-gates of sin by the aid of its ministers, “false teachers,” and “iniquity abounds.” Christianity is withdrawing its flickering rays from multitudes who have fallen under the withering influence of its false friends.

What a picture does Christendom present to-day in its moral aspect! While many are saying “peace and safety,” singing of “a good time coming,” and telling of great reforms, trusting in the “doctrines of men” for regenerating power; sin, in every form that can be mentioned, is found, not lurking in the darkest corners, but protruding itself into the fairest portions of civilized society, and under the rays

of the clearest religious influences, gathering clouds so dense as to produce dismay and terror to the careful watchers, but causing insensibility and darkness in the minds of the deceived multitudes whose "love is waxen cold." Men are so constituted as to "first pity, next endure, then embrace."

The religious portions of community have so mingled their interests, customs, pursuits and fashions, with the irreligious, that they have lost their moral hold upon community, so that many of the crimes committed are sanctioned by religious teachers,—nay, are often conceived and perpetrated by them. Deeds of the most infamous kind are of daily occurrence, and are now so common as to cease to cause great astonishment. Scarce a journalist of the day can strike off a sheet but what is filled with accounts of horrible crimes committed in some part of the country.

Passing over the national sins of Christian Europe, with their legalized oppression and cruelty, worship of idols, licensing gaming, drinking and other houses of infamous practices,—neglecting to detail the evils, the enormous abominations of slavery, and other legalized sins of Christian America,—we look at individual sins; and in this the heart sickens. I now quote a few extracts from journals relating to crime.

Says the *N. Y. Herald*, "Crimes of all descriptions are on the increase, especially those of the blackest dye, the increase being much greater

than the proportionate increase of population. To what circumstances must these things be ascribed? ”

Says the *Expositor*, a political paper, “Crimes unprecedented in number, and unequalled in atrocity, fill every section of our country with horrors, exhibiting a hardened barbarity, in their details, only to be exceeded in the bosom of demons from the burning pit.”

Says the *Scientific American*, “It is admitted, by all parties, that crimes of the most outrageous and unprecedented character abound through the country, and probably throughout the world, to a degree wholly unparalleled.”

Says the *Christian Herald*, “It is a fact that in about the same ratio that the cause of experimental religion declines, immorality and vice increase. This general truth is painfully illustrated by the astonishing increase of crime in Boston.”

Says the *Boston Recorder*, “Within the last forty years commitments for crimes have increased in England from five thousand to thirty-one thousand,—more than sixfold, and four times faster than the increase of population. In Scotland, the increase of crime in the same period has arisen from eighty-nine to three thousand eight hundred and eighty-four,—forty-three-fold, and has advanced twenty-five times faster than the population. That this prodigious increase has occurred during a period of almost unbroken peace, amid great improvements in

criminal legislation and prison discipline, too, and notwithstanding unparalleled efforts to diffuse education and religion, creates *a problem* of no easy solution."

Says the *N. Y. Herald*, speaking of France, "Of separations between husbands and wives, the number has arisen from six hundred and forty-three in A. D. 1837, to eleven hundred and eight in A. D. 1844. [Since then the records up to the present year show an alarming increase.—I. C. W.] If we turn to criminal records, we shall find the same painful facts. It is estimated that there are annually, in the United States, five hundred thousand cases of assault and battery, one hundred thousand thefts, eight hundred suicides, eight hundred murders." Do not such facts show the Saviour's words fulfilled,— "iniquity shall abound"? Notice of such terrible facts might be multiplied to almost any length, had we room; but much of these things is known to reflecting readers. Call to mind the facts that have been spread out before you by the journalists for the last forty years, and the picture is too sickening to look upon for much length of time; although there are some bright spots to attract the eye and refresh the heart,— to beget gratitude to God for his grace, his long-suffering, his wonderful forbearance in causing the spirit of war to be restrained during this time of great iniquity, that the Gospel might have a universal spread among all nations. He who has seen the evils of the times,— the peril

of these days,— and hid himself in the name of the Lord, has been blessed indeed; and the words of Christ are to his chosen in this time of iniquity —

Verse 13. “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Blessed promise! “SHALL BE SAVED.” Who will obtain it? He who fights the “fight of faith, and lays hold on eternal life.” Let us look well to our ways; it is he that endures unto the END that is to BE SAVED.

Verse 14. “And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” This was the purpose of God, as given by the prophets, Christ and his apostles, that the Gospel should be published to all the world prior to its end. Thus Jesus commands his disciples to “go into all the world, and preach the Gospel;” but he requires them to tarry till they “receive power from on high.”

And Jesus said unto them, “That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”—Luke 24 : 47. When this work shall have been accomplished sufficiently to fulfil the prediction, “then shall the end come.”

What has been the progress in the spread of the Gospel? In the first century the Gospel was preached in Palestine, Syria, Nathalia, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, Italy and Northern Africa. Mosheim says, “We

have unquestionable evidence of the faith of Christ in the whole East; also among the Germans, Spaniards, Celts, Bretons, and other nations in early times."

In the third century, "in Arabia, Moesia, Thrace and Gaul-France."

In the fourth century, "in Armenia (Abysinia or Ethiopia), Iberia, and the Goths."

In the fifth century, "to the Libanus and Anti-Libanus, many German nations, Vandals, Sueves and Alans."

In the sixth century, "in Abasgi, Heruli, Luzi, Zani in Greece, Bohemians and Thuringians in Germany."

In the seventh century, "in the deserts of Asia and the northern part of China."

In the eighth century, "to the Scythians or Tartars, in Hyrcania, Bactria, Margiania and Sogdia."

In the ninth century, "to the Huns, Saxons, and Frieslanders; also in Sweden, Denmark, Bulgaria, Gazarians, Bohemia, to the Moravians, Sclavonians, Arentiani, Dalmatia, and the Russians."—*Ency. Amer.*, vol. 3, p. 168.

Since the reformation of the sixteenth century, all Europe has been illuminated by the light of the Gospel; America also, North and South America, the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The predicted work must be nearly accomplished. During the last fifty years missionaries of the cross have traversed the different parts of the earth, until the news of a crucified

and risen Saviour has encompassed the globe, the Bible has been translated into more than two hundred different languages and dialects, and is being circulated in all lands, to all nations, bearing not only the news of the Saviour, but of his kingdom of immortality and "eternal life."

But is it not to *convert all nations*? you may ask. No; it is to be "a witness to all nations." There is no promise or prospect of all nations being converted; even the Jewish nation "would not" be converted by Christ when on earth, but "as many as will receive him" will have "power to become the sons of God."

Let us look at the birthplace of Christianity, Asia, where Jesus did his work of missions, and his apostles labored with such success, now occupied by the Mahometans, and become a land of idolatry. See Germany, the cradle of the great Reformation, now infested with the most loathsome moral diseases,—Catholicism and Protestantism on an equal footing in the government. The pernicious system of Neology is the leading theology, learned by the clergy and taught in their churches, their literature, in their grammar-schools,—and thus infidelity, in the garb of Christianity, sits enthroned upon the principles of *Rationalism*. In England and Scotland,—the brightest spots in the old world, and where Christianity has taken the deepest root of any part of the world,—things are not much better. The old established church is fast verging to papacy, and the dissenting churches are

now quarrelling for the ascendancy, and aspiring after the episcopacy and the patronage of government. In America "the churches are the bulwark of American slavery." (Holding a slave was a sin that disqualified a man for being a member of Mahomet's church.) Other sins of flagrant character are not only tolerated but patronized by many of them. Surely, the Gospel does not convert all who come in contact with it.

While it has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, in Asia, Africa, Europe, America, the vast empire of China, Japan, and the islands of the seas, the glad tidings have encircled the earth with its cheering light and healing properties, its promise of life to all who obey it; admonishing the guilty nations of God's purpose to save a people for himself, to establish a kingdom of his own on the ruins of all earthly dominions. Nations that have been enlightened by the Gospel, though not Christianized, have helped forward the work of God in spreading his truth. Although, in many instances, they have had false views of the result of the Gospel, and supposed all nations would be converted by it, yet God's purpose is accomplished through their instrumentality.

According to all accounts which we have in the case, the purpose of God in bringing "the Gospel of his grace" to the nations, must be nearly accomplished, and the time has arrived when we should expect the *end*,—not the end to which

some are looking, the end of sin by the influence of the Gospel. God has foreseen that the Gospel would not produce that result, and consequently has told us it would be otherwise. The parables of Christ, also, are clear on this point. Look at that of the good and evil servants, of the ten virgins, the ten talents, the wheat and tares, the good and bad fish, and your conscience will be sufficiently enlightened to bear testimony to the truth everywhere shining in the Bible on this point.

If we will examine facts that are within our reach, we shall find that there is not a nation on earth to whom the Gospel has not been preached. Rev. J. O. Choules, author of one of the greatest works ever published on missions, giving their history from the apostolic age down to the present time, being asked, in A. D. 1842, if he knew of any nation that had never had the Gospel, replied that he did not. Rev. Mr. James, agent for "the American Bible Society," being asked the question, gave the same answer. Rev. Nathan Bangs, D.D., for many years at the head of the Methodist missionary operations, was asked the same question, and replied that "he believed there was a tribe somewhere in the north-west coast of North America, to whom the Gospel had never been preached." That was twelve years ago, and missionary work has been rapidly advancing since, and we believe the work is nearly finished, and the end of this age is close at hand.

“AND THEN SHALL THE END COME.”

We have seen what Christ declared must be done and suffered before “the end come.” WHAT END? I answer, the end of the Gentile age; the end inquired after by the disciples; the end to which Jesus alluded, sixth verse, where he says, “for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” All the criticisms of Universalists and others, on the Greek word “*Aionos*,” here translated “*end of the world*,” are of no force, for it is not contended that the end of “*Cosmos*,” the physical globe, is meant. The term here is the same as “The harvest is the end of the world.” The end of the age,—not of the Jewish age, for that had ended at the death of Christ, as is clearly shown in Gal. 3 : 16–19, and Heb. 9 : 15–17; but of the Gospel age,—the age in which the Gospel was to be dispensed to all nations. But some will assert that this passage was fulfilled in Paul’s day, because he says (Col. 1 : 23), “The Gospel which was preached to every creature under heaven;” and (Rom. 10 : 18), “Have they not all heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” We reply to this, that there is no reason to believe, from these texts, nor from other facts, that the Gospel was then proclaimed by the living preacher to all persons, but “their sound,” the report, is circulated all abroad, and has reached all parts of the known world. But

that had no connection with the end of the Jewish dispensation, for that had closed before Paul entered upon his ministry. But the end mentioned in the text has not occurred yet; but the harbingers of it are clearly manifest before us.

There are many, and among them men of judgment, learning and talent, who suppose this phrase, "*this Gospel of the kingdom*," signifies the specific message relating to the second coming of Christ and his kingdom, some of whom believe it synchronizes with Rev. 14 : 6 — "And I saw *another* angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, to every nation and kindred, * * saying with a loud voice * * the hour (time) of his judgment is come," &c. I am of this latter opinion. The translation of Campbell, of Matt. 24 : 14, seems to give force to this idea : "And this good tidings of the reign shall be published through all the world, for the information of all nations, and then shall come the end." Whiting's version also gives the same idea : "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the world, for a testimony to all nations, and then will the end come."

In either sense in which you may look at it certain it is that the work is nearly completed. Supposing it to refer to the proclamation of the immediate coming of Christ, and the judgment, *then* we have the picture spread before us nearly finished. During the last forty years such a proclamation has gone forth from land to land,

from city to city; and its thrilling sound has resounded through the hill country, and across the valleys, the plains and the prairies, striking conviction to the hearts of the guilty inhabitants of earth, and awakening an interest, and producing holy and joyous emotions in the humble children of God, who are but "pilgrims and strangers" in this vale of tears. It is well known to many that an excitement about the world being near its end has been affecting a certain class in America, and multitudes have only looked at it as a visionary affair of small limit and little consequence, while many have made themselves merry or angry with the imperfections and errors of the instrumentalities engaged in this work. But there are some who have looked further into this subject, and have seen something beyond the errors and mistakes, some account of which I shall give in the second part of this work, in illustrating the parable of the ten virgins.

Jesus having prophesied of the most prominent events that would mark the progress of the Gentile age from his first advent to the end of the world,—the history of the fulfilment of which we have been citing,—he next takes up the first question of the disciples,

"WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?"

Or, when shall this terrible overthrow take place, that the temple shall be thrown down and

Jerusalem be desolate and "laid even with the ground"? For thus had Jesus spoken. After the general remark, or synopsis of events, Jesus commences to give a more minute account of those events. The answer to this question was especially calculated for the benefit of the disciples, that they might know when to leave the doomed city.

Verses 15, 16.—"When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." How shall the disciples be able to gain the desired information by such an answer as this? It is evident that our Lord intended that his followers should be instructed in Scripture truth. This is the way he generally taught, saying, "it is written," or "that it might be fulfilled which was written." So here, the subject of Jerusalem's overthrow, its ruin and its perpetual desolation, is under contemplation. Jesus had predicted it, his disciples had heard it; they were interested about it, for it was their temporal or earthly home. But its ruin had been mentioned before by the prophet Daniel. Jesus would have them "understand" Daniel, as he would formerly have Daniel understand Jeremiah. When Daniel was considering the prophecy of Jer. 25, and saw that the desolation was to "be from one end of the earth to the other" (see Dan. 9 : 2, &c.), an angel was sent to instruct him, and he

was told the fate of Jerusalem, Dan. 9 : 26, 27. Here we find seventy weeks allotted the Jews, after which a "prince should come, and his people shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, * * and unto the end of the war desolations are determined, * * * and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." In Luke 21 : 20, it is clearly stated: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." He did not tell them it would be ten or twenty years to the time; but he referred them to Daniel, and told them to read and understand, and when they saw what was there predicted taking place, they must make their escape.

By turning to Daniel, eighth chapter, they would find Daniel by the river Ulai, in vision, and seeing certain symbols, which are given to represent coming powers. He sees a ram with two horns. The explaining angel tells him "it is Media and Persia." He sees a rough goat, with a notable horn, which is finally broken, and for it come up four notable horns. The angel tells him, "the goat is the kingdom of Grecia, and the great horn is the first king, and the four that came up for it are four kingdoms that shall stand up out of that nation." He sees "a little horn come out of one of the winds of heaven, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south,

and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." The angel tells him that this "is a king of fierce countenance that shall stand up in the latter time of the four divisions of Grecia, that he shall understand dark sentences, and shall stand up against the Prince of princes," &c. Daniel sees this horn "wax great, even to the host of heaven. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and it practised and prospered." He also hears one angel ask another the length of time "concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot."—Dan. 8: 9–14. In Dan. 9: 26, 27, the angel explains this matter. I have already quoted it, but it is here in place again: "And, after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah (¹Prince of princes') be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and until the end of the war desolations are determined, * * * and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation."

Now, all may see at once that this horn (not that of Dan. 7) can be none other than a symbol of the Roman civil power (Pagan), which established itself on the ruins of Grecia, B. C. 30, and waxed exceeding great, east, west, and south, toward the pleasant land—Judea. Herod, a Roman ruler, tried to kill the infant "Prince;"

Pilate, a Roman ruler, gave sentence against him to be crucified. Vespasian was Emperor of Rome, A. D. 68 to 70, and his son Titus (a "prince") entered Judea with a large army and destroyed many cities, and besieged Jerusalem, took it, destroyed it and its temple and sanctuary, and it has been desolate ever since, under the Romans, and since under the Mahometans, and is to remain so "until the consummation."— See Luke 21 : 24.

Jesus directs his disciples to these plain prophetic truths, relating to the city and its destruction, about which they had asked him. He says, "When ye, therefore, see the abomination of desolation (see Dan. 8 : 13, and 9 : 27), spoken of by Daniel the prophet, whoso readeth let him understand." It will be seen that Jesus speaks in the singular, "abomination of desolation." In Dan. 8 : 13, it is also in the singular, but is called "transgression of desolation." In Dan. 9 : 27, we have it plural, "abominations," showing that more than one abominable power would be employed to continue the work of "desolation determined." In Dan. 12 : 11, we have the account of another, called "the abomination that maketh desolate," and is to be "set up twelve hundred and ninety days" (years). But as this one had nothing to do with "the city and sanctuary" of Jerusalem, and as it is very evident that it relates to the papal power, that did not exist for more than four hundred years after Jerusalem's overthrow, we see no propriety in

the notion that some entertain that this was what our Lord alludes to. We know many words, and much time and money, have been spent to attempt to prove this latter notion; but we believe that nothing like argument has yet been presented to show that it has foundation, however sincere its advocates may have been.

STAND IN THE HOLY PLACE.

This was to be a sign for the disciples to escape from their city for safety. They well knew that God had pronounced terrible judgments on the people and their land. They knew that judgment was coming by the hand of "a nation from far, of fierce countenance." Deut. 28: 49, Dan. 8: 23, and many other scriptures, teach this. This was an idolatrous nation, of great cruelty; one that would not spare old nor young. It is called by the angel "transgression of desolation;" by the Saviour, "abomination of desolation." Scholars tell us that it is a Hebrew expression, signifying "*an abominable or hateful destroyer.*"

Such was the Roman beast, Dan. 7: 7, whom God took to desolate Judea, and punish the Jews. But the remark about "the holy place" has been much talked of, and many objections raised against the idea that Jesus was alluding to Jerusalem's overthrow; and in criticizing the views of those who affirm that it does, they wholly miss the mark by making us to say that

the Romans stood in the temple of Jerusalem as a sign for the disciples to flee. But this we do not assert. Let us see what is the character of the *land of Judea*, where the Romans did stand, or rule. In the Song of Moses, recorded in Exodus 15, while he is recounting the acts of God's mercy to his people, he says, verse 13 : "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear and be afraid, * * * all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. * * * Thou shalt bring them (thy people) in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, *in the sanctuary*, O Lord, *which* thy hands have established."—Verse 17.

Here is a description of Canaan; it is called God's "HOLY HABITATION," the mountain of his INHERITANCE, and his SANCTUARY. In Ps. 78 : 54-69, while David is speaking of the same work of God, he says : "And he brought them to the border of HIS SANCTUARY, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. He cast out the heathen also before them," &c. Now, this was not the sanctuary in the temple which Solomon built, nor the one which Nehemiah built; but it is Canaan, the land of Judea, and ever since called the HOLY LAND. In Isa. 60 : 13, the Lord speaks of this land, and of planting trees to "beautify the place of his sanc-

tuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious." In Isa. 64 : 10, the prophet, in speaking of God's judgments, says, "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation." In Zech. 2 : 12, the prophet asserts, "And the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the HOLY LAND, and shall choose Jerusalem again." There is a large number of texts to show that the land of Canaan is God's chosen, holy land, his sanctuary, &c. I will now only cite the reader to a few more. Isa. 11 : 9 ; 63 : 18 ; also, 27 : 13 ; 56 : 7 ; 57 : 13 ; 65 : 11 ; 66 : 20. Ps. 78 : 1 ; 99 : 9. Jer. 31 : 23. Ezek. 20 : 40 ; 28 : 14. Zeph. 3 : 11. Joel 2 : 1 ; 3 : 17. Now, we place ourselves back where the disciples were, and watch for the judgment to come on the Jewish nation, as had been predicted. We know that Canaan is God's holy chosen land ; "it shall not be sold forever ;" it is a land separate from all others ; but it is to be desolated by Daniel's fourth dreadful and terrible beast. It is in universal power ; it has "stood up against the Prince of princes ;" it now comes with an armed host, and destroys the "cities of God," desolating the land, city after city, until it appears before Jerusalem. We listen, and Jesus says, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—Luke 21 : 24. Ought we not to understand ? And should we not flee

when such a sign appeared? Doddridge says, "that when Vespasian was drawing his forces towards Jerusalem, a great multitude fled from Jericho into the mountainous country for their security."

Whitby says, "Then the Christians fled to Pella, in Persia, a mountainous country, and other places under the government of King Agrippa, where they found safety." In Josephus, book 2, ch. 19, sect. 6, we read, "There may another very important and very providential reason be assigned for this strange and foolish retreat of Cestius, which, if Josephus had been a Christian, he might have taken notice of also, and that is the affording the Jewish Christians in the city an opportunity of calling to mind the prediction and caution given them by Christ, about thirty-three and a half years before, that *when they should see the abomination of desolation* (the idolatrous Roman armies, with the images of their idols in their designs, ready to lay Jerusalem desolate) *stand where it ought not, or in the holy place; or when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies*, they should then *flee to the mountains*. By complying with which, these Jewish Christians fled to the mountains of Pella, and escaped this destruction. Nor was there, perhaps, any one instance of a more impolitic, but more providential conduct, than this retreat of Cestius, visible during this whole siege of Jerusalem." This is

in a note by the editor of Josephus' works. See *Literal Accomp. of Proph.*, pp. 69, 70.

We know that some have attempted to show that this power stood where it ought, and, consequently, *did not* fulfil the prophecy; and that the apostate church, which had been two hundred years festering and corrupting, distracted and distorted, was the temple (church) which Paul says is holy, and that the Pope stood in that holy place, or holy church. To this we will only say, First, that Israel ought not to have defiled God's land, to receive his chastening rod. The land of Israel should have been the home of Israel until the end of time. To this the Scriptures abundantly testify. Secondly, the church was not very holy (in the sixth century) in the place where Papacy reigned; and again, the argument that the Roman army was God's avenger, and stood where it ought, will hold equally good with Papacy. See 2 Thess. 2: 10, 11, 12. "God sends them strong delusion," and raises up Papacy "that they all may believe a lie, that they all may be damned, * * * because they had pleasure in unrighteousness." But we do not so argue in either case. Such things ought not to have been.

Verses 16 to 20.— "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to

them that give suck in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." We have already quoted extracts of history to show that the Christians obeyed this injunction of our Lord. When they saw that the city was invaded, they watched their opportunity, and, as Eusebius says, "ALL ESCAPED." In the same account, given by Luke, when speaking of Jerusalem being "encompassed with armies," the same exhortation is given the disciples as is above given in Matthew. In the eastern cities the roofs of their houses are flat, and they frequently occupy them, and on seeing danger approaching they could easily escape to the gates of the city, and flee as directed. They are taught to ask God's assistance in this evil time, that it may not be so with them that they could not escape. If in winter, they might perish. If on the Sabbath day, the law would not allow them to travel.

The idea has been advanced, and attempts made to argue, that the fleeing to the mountains here mentioned was intended for the church, or the pure in the church, at a later date,—some five hundred years later,—when, by order of Justin, emperor of Rome, all Christians were required to subscribe to the creed of Chalcedon, and to obey the mandates of the Pope. History has been quoted to prove that some Christians did escape; and many others, who took their clothes and other effects, were robbed, and some killed. In reply to this, we only cite the reader to a few

facts. First, Jesus told "them that are in JUDEA to flee to the mountains;" not those in other places. He was speaking to them about their escape from danger, when Jerusalem and all Judea was to be desolated. But where was the mass of the disciples in A. D. 500 and onward? Not in Judea, but in Europe, and in Africa, and other parts of Asia. At that time there were few churches of consequence in Judea, and little good to persecute; while in nearly all parts of Europe disciples were multiplied, and persecution raged violently, as it did also in Africa. Why, then, is Judea singled out, and her disciples instructed how to escape the ire of the Pope, when they were the least of all to be disturbed?

The same ones urge that the siege of Jerusalem was two or more years, and the disciples had time to take their effects, and need *not* "pray that their flight be not in winter, nor on the Sabbath-day." But, we ask, How did the disciples know that two or five years would elapse before Jerusalem would be taken, when they saw the army retreat? They only saw a chance to escape, and they obeyed and were safe. Jesus knew how to instruct them; and had they dallied and waited, they too would have been deceived and lost. Had they taken their effects with them, the Roman soldiers would probably have robbed and killed them.

But we will look at the substitute. How was it at the time of Justin's decree? History gives

it, and says: "The term of three months" was given "to unite all men in one faith, whether Jews, Gentiles or Christians. Such as did not, were excluded from all employments, both civil and military, rendered incapable of leaving anything by will, and their estates confiscated."—*Bower*, vol. i., p. 334.

Here we see that THREE MONTHS' TIME is given for Christians or others to voluntarily decide, to plan, to make sales of property, to move their effects without disturbance to other parts of the world. No Sabbath-day hinderance, no need of leaving in haste, or leaving clothing or property. But such as waited until the law was in force, and then fled, were inhumanly treated, robbed and murdered, says Bower.

Verse 21.—"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." Or, "Because there shall be."—*Campbell's Trans.* Or, "Afterwards there shall be."—*Greenfield's Lexicon*.

When was this tribulation to come, and on whom? We answer, after the flight of the disciples from their homes to the mountains; and it was to be suffered by the church of Christ. The same is hinted in the ninth and tenth verses. Jesus was not talking to the Jews, nor for their benefit; but to, and for, his disciples. It is often asserted that this great tribulation was experienced by the Jews, and the history of their dreadful calamities quoted to prove it. Let us

look at it and see. It is true that the Jews held out a great length of time in the siege; and such was the state of famine that women cooked and ate their children. Sedition and slaughter were also in their midst; and, finally, about one million one hundred thousand Jews perished, and perhaps as many more were carried off captive. This is a little more than two millions, and much suffering. But is this a greater trouble than was experienced when all the inhabitants of earth perished in the flood? Or, than when the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admar and Zeboim, perished by the rain of fire and brimstone from heaven? Is it greater than one to come, when Jesus shall cause all the wicked of earth to be burned with fire? when "all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and be burned up root and branch"? This will be a more dreadful trouble than that the Jews experienced. Besides, the Jews suffered a greater trouble in the second century, under Adrian, than they did by Titus.

In Bishop Newton's work on the Prophecies he gives the following: "Ælius Adrian came to Jerusalem forty-seven years after its destruction by Titus, and formed the purpose of rebuilding the city; but did not carry out his purpose until near the close of his reign, or about A. D. 130. Having erected a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, instead of to the God of the Jews, they were provoked to an open revolt, and the result was the most appalling, involving not only the Jews

in great calamities, but also (in the language of history) 'the true professors of the Gospel.' "

Bishop Newton quotes from Mr. Mead and Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Appian. "After the revolt of the Jews, the city was besieged by the Romans under Adrian, and entirely burnt and consumed. The Jews were subdued with most terrible slaughter, fifty of their strongest castles, and nine hundred and eighty-five of their best towns were sacked or demolished; five hundred and eighty thousand men fell in battle, besides an INFINITE MULTITUDE who perished by famine, and sickness, and fire; so that Judea was almost all desolated. (This looks like an ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION with an idol temple.) The Jewish writers themselves reckon that doubly more Jews were slain in this war than came out of Egypt, and that their sufferings under NEBUCHADNEZZAR and TITUS WERE NOT SO GREAT AS WHAT THEY ENDURED UNDER ADRIAN." "Of the Jews who survived this second ruin of their nation, an incredible number of every age and sex were sold like horses, and dispersed over the earth."

It was during this war that the foundations of the temple were entirely demolished, and Jerusalem "ploughed as a field."

This tribulation and desolation was not in that GENERATION in which the disciples lived, to whom Jesus spake the prophecy. It was a hundred years after them, and, although a greater calamity, it could not fulfil the prophecy, but

was the workings of "the abomination of desolation." Again, if we should allow that this tribulation was on the Jews, or any wicked nation, we could not harmonize it with Dan. 12: 1 — "And at that time shall Michael stand up (reign) the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble SUCH AS NEVER WAS since there was a nation even to that same time." This time of trouble is to occur at the second coming of Christ, and is to come on the wicked; for, "at that time, thy people shall be delivered, EVERY ONE that shall be found written in the book." Consequently, we argue that the tribulation in Matt. 24: 21, is to be found in the church of God. There is an allusion in each text to the nature of the "tribulation" and "trouble" being different; "*such as was not*," and "*such as never was*." It is true that the church of God had suffered much while connected with a rebellious nation — Israel. It is true that, after Christ, the Christian church suffered much in the days of the apostles and the following "ten persecutions" under pagan Rome; and it may be the language of the text is begun to be fulfilled in them; but we believe that the church delivered up to the papacy, and worn out by its cruel tyranny — the hardships of those who fled to the wilderness, and were there hunted and butchered like the deer for more than a thousand years — fills the picture of the words. During Jerusalem's destruction, as we have said, about

one million one hundred thousand Jews perished ; while, during a thousand years, more than fifty million, some estimate seventy million, saints were put to death ; many in the most cruel manner that human ingenuity aided by satanic hatred could invent. The next verse fully settles the question that the saints of God are the subjects of this tribulation.

Verse 22.—“ And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” Or, “ And unless those days should be cut short, no flesh would remain alive ; but for the elect’s sake those days will be cut short.” — *Murdock*. Or, “ Had the Lord assigned it a long duration, no soul could escape. But for the sake of the people whom he hath elected, he hath made its duration the shorter.” — *Campbell’s Trans. of Mark 13 : 20*.

Now, if this tribulation was on the Jews and all those who engaged in the siege, and all the Christians at Jerusalem had perished together, yet the larger part of the Jewish nation were not there, and also many and large churches of Christians were then established in many other places ; consequently, much flesh, both of Jews and Christians, would have been saved in that event.

BUT FOR THE ELECT’S SAKE.

Who are the elect ? Not the Jews ; for they were rejected of God, and his curse rested on

them, and has continued, according to his word, to this day. In Isaiah 42 : 1, Christ is alluded to as God's elect. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." In Rom. 8 : 32, 33, Paul says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Also, Rom. 11 : 5—"Even so then, at this present time, also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Peter informs us how men are elected. 1 Peter 1 : 2—"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Let us all examine ourselves whether we are thus elected of God. In Matt. 24 : 31, we read that when Jesus comes to reward men as their work shall be, he "sends his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds." The elect, then, are the disciples of Jesus Christ, the obedient followers of the Lamb of God; for their sake

"THOSE DAYS SHALL BE SHORTENED."

What days are to be shortened, or what are we to understand by this language of Christ?

We have seen that the great tribulation was to

be on the elect, and that it was caused by the "man of sin," or Papacy. In Dan. 7 : 25, we are informed that the little horn, symbolizing Papacy, "shall speak great words against the MOST HIGH, and shall wear out the saints of the MOST HIGH, and think to change times and laws ; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." To ascertain the length of this time we consult other portions of holy writ relating to the same matter. In Rev. 12 : 14, the same expressions occur while treating of the church which goes into the wilderness from the face of the serpent. In the sixth verse of the same chapter it is called twelve hundred and sixty days. In Rev. 11 : 2, and 13 : 5-7, it is called "forty-two months ;" third verse, twelve hundred and sixty days ; consequently, while we allow this to be prophetic time, or symbolic time, as it is connected with symbolic prophecy, we reckon each day for a year, as we find that rule given by the Lord.— Num. 14 : 34 ; Ezek. 4 : 1-6.

So, then, the saints were to be in the hand of Papacy twelve hundred and sixty years (please notice our remarks on verses nine and ten), and "he is to wear them out." Such work he did ; and had not God limited him, as he did Satan in the case of Job, he would have not only destroyed the word of life, and religion of Christ, but all the persons who adhered to it. Had his control over the nations not been checked, no flesh of the true church would now be living.

Call to mind the arrogant pretensions of piety and power, the edicts and laws to persecute and punish, which have emanated from Rome. Remember the labor expended to search out and kill the poor Waldenses and others, in the mountainous countries of Germany and France. Consider the expenditure to search out all, in every land, who dare dissent from the Romish doctrines, and to destroy those they could not convert. But the Lord cared for his people, and a limit is given; the church is not to continue in his hand until the end of time, nor are they to endure so severe affliction all the while they are in his power. It has been thought by some that the days here referred to are the twelve hundred and ninety mentioned in Dan. 12 as the duration of the "abomination that maketh desolate," and that these are cut short thirty years. But this is putting words in the Saviour's mouth which we think were not in his mind, and we want "the mind of Christ." Such an idea would conflict with truth in other places. We are not only wanting in evidence that the twelve hundred and sixty days and twelve hundred and ninety commence at the same time, but we have much evidence that they do not. We think the "abomination that maketh desolate twelve hundred and ninety days" (Dr. Thomas), must have been the second abomination of Daniel, and is the old Pagan Roman image-worship, new vamped and "set up" in the church by civil power to rule. After he is thus established permanently, the

saints are put into his hand twelve hundred and sixty days (years). While they are in his hand he persecutes and kills them, thousands and millions of them, which is the "great tribulation." But is not this to last twelve hundred and sixty years? I answer that there is no Scripture to inform us of it. But have you not quoted Scripture to show the saints in his hand twelve hundred and sixty years? Yes; and I could quote, also, to show that this (horn) power makes war with the saints, and *prevails, while time lasts* (see Dan. 7 : 21, 22); but all this does not prove the tribulation eighteen hundred, or twelve hundred and sixty years long. We think it probable that Jesus made an allusion to the twelve hundred and sixty days or years, in verse 29; but it would not seem prudent for us to assume this positively, although it looks very likely to be the fact. There are those who argue that "those days" refer to "the times of the Gentiles," the thirteen hundred and thirty-five or twenty-three hundred days. I confess that there seems to be a propriety in this idea, yet I do not fully adopt it. After the "plucking up of three kingdoms," of the ten into which Western Rome was divided, which occurred between A. D. 493 and 538, the Papacy had control over the faith and consciences of the church. We find facts in history which we think clearly show that, by force of arms, under the order of Justinian, and by the hand of Belisarius, the Ostrogoths, "after a siege of one year and nine days,

were driven from Rome in the month of March, 538," and the Papacy invested with the full power of the edict which Justinian issued in 533. We, therefore, start the twelve hundred and sixty there, and run on, through blood and fire, the rack and the guillotine, for nearly one thousand years. But in 1373 a John Huss is born, and he is made, by God's grace, valiant for the truth. In A. D. 1483 Martin Luther is born. In A. D. 1484 Ulric Zuingli is born. In 1497 Philip Melancthon is born. In 1509 John Calvin is born. Early in the history of these men, God shows his favor by illuminating them with the word of life, and a zeal for its publication. Their history is known. In the sixteenth century Papal Europe roars and groans like the sea in a mighty storm. The Gospel is preached, and God blesses the word; Papacy begins to fall in the shade before it. "The tribulation" is to be stayed—"be shortened;" the days shortened, if you please—not the twelve hundred and sixty, but the tribulation days. "But for the elect's sake those days will be cut short."—*Murdock*. The reformation continued, and for a time the struggle was mighty; but the Protestants gained permanent footing, and the church found a respite from their long and constant persecutions. Papal princes even refused to countenance the bloody tyranny of Papacy, as they had done before. So that, since A. D. 1688, there has been *no general persecution*. "In A. D. 1685, the famous edict of Nantz was revoked, when Louis

XIV., of France, put forth all his efforts to establish Papacy upon the ruin and conversion of Protestantism. * * This caused the Protestants of Germany to form the famous league of Augsburg. The war became general, and raged in Hungary, Germany, Flanders, Spain, and Italy. * * * This war gave A GENERAL TRIUMPH to the reformation over Popery — leagued with the infidels, and greatly facilitated the progress of the arts and sciences.”—*Uni. Hist.*, pp. 196–200.

Although general persecution was stayed here, yet local persecution has continued to the present day. But in 1772, and onward, the governments of Germany, Austria and Spain, became so much affected by Protestant and Gospel principles, as to greatly modify their laws, and provide for the general diffusion of knowledge, which almost effectually put a stop to public martyrdom. “But for the sake of the people whom he hath elected, he hath made its duration the shorter.”—*Campbell*.

If any of our readers are incapable of seeing the use I make of the term “shortening of these days,” to be proper, will they please examine the following texts? Ps. 89 : 45; 102 : 23. Prov. 10 : 27. Isa. 50 : 2; 59 : 1. Num. 11 : 23. Rom. 9 : 28. 2 Kings 10 : 30.

Verse 23.—“Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe *it* not.”

24.—“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs

and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

It is not to be expected, in all cases of Scripture teaching, that one text after another, in continuous succession, goes directly to explain and enforce the preceding; but in this discourse of our Lord we have this characteristic. He is giving a prophetic history of a chain of events in their consecutive order. After speaking of shortening the days of tribulation, he adds, "THEN, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there. For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show great signs and wonders." This is in the same link of the chain as verses eleven and twelve. During the great tribulation, from the sixth to the seventeenth centuries, many false Christs did arise, as I have shown in a table in my remarks on verse five. False teachers also arose; but here we are told what they will say: "Lo, here is Christ, or there." It is a fact worthy of notice, though very unpleasant to some to have it noticed, that a number of religious bodies have their birth-place just where the "great tribulation" ceased, and those bodies taught just what Jesus tells us not to believe.

A Swedenborg starts upon the stage, and teaches, "Now is the time of the Lord's second advent—an advent not in person, but in spirit;" that he is revealed in the New Jerusalem church, &c.; that Christ does not exist in person. Peter refers to these false teachers. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3—"But there were false prophets also among the

people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." They deny the Lord, his personal existence, and teach that he comes in spirit to establish a New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) church. Many follow their pernicious ways; consequently, if we speak of Jesus coming according to the Scriptures, "the way of truth is evil spoken of" by their scoffing.

Just here, too, start the Shakers, under the guidance of Ann Lee, saying that Christ's second coming is spiritual, and is developed in *their* order of things.

Here, also, Daniel Whitby's new mode of teaching takes root, which asserts the spiritual coming of Christ, and spiritual resurrection, and temporal millennium. On this spot, also, arises Universalism, declaring that Christ made his second advent "there," at the destruction of Jerusalem. Since then, Smith, the Mormon, asserted Christ would be found at Nauvoo, in the desert. Not long since, it was asserted in a missionary sermon, preached by a popular man, and published, and extensively circulated, that Christ's second advent was manifested by the improvements of agriculture and education, and

the invention of steam-power. Others have asserted that Christ would be found by leaving the cities and fields, and going out into the wilderness. Some did this in 1844. Since then many have taught "Lo, here, or there," and sought to lead the people to take a step entirely contrary to the word. Many of the above false teachers have had their signs and wonders, their gifts of tongues, of miracles and strange phenomena, by which the unwary have been captivated. But the most artful of all yet appearing is the spirit-rapping manifestation. This class teach that Christ is being revealed in their system. Their signs and wonders are more captivating than all others. "Believe it not," says Jesus; "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before," in verse 11.

Verse 26.—"Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."

We are not to change our location to find the Lord, although required to by those we think wise. We are not to believe that Jesus changes his location, or office, although we have been certain he would do so at a given point. We must watch.

Verse 27.—"For, as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

When our Lord appears, all will know it; it will not be done without our notice, but he will be

as visible as the light, and his person will be seen. Thus, he said, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself."—John 14 : 3. Again: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."—Rev. 1 : 7. He will be seen as he was seen by his disciples on the day of his ascension. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And, while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM *go into heaven.*"—Acts 1 : 9-11.

Did every eye see him come at the destruction of Jerusalem? Did all kindreds of the earth wail because of him? Did he come in *like manner* as he went up into heaven? Has he ever come so at any time since? All men must answer, No. When he comes, his people will know him. So says Isaiah, 25: 9 — "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." But with the workers of iniquity how reverse the scene!

“The kings of the earth, the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?”—Rev. 6 : 15–17. They, too, will see him, and know that it is Christ the Judge.

Reader, in which company are you, and which do you intend to be in, in this coming scene? If you are not of those who are ready, watching and waiting, I beseech you to improve this moment, and become a follower of the blessed Lord and Saviour. Then you will long to see him, that you may be made like him and dwell with him forever. And when they say, “Lo, here is Christ, or there is he,” or he has come in this or that place or manner, or he will come at such a point, you should call to mind the above passages, and others, and remember that when Jesus comes you will know it, and having his spirit you will be attracted by it, and his angels will take you to him.

Verse 28.—“For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”

Jesus here mentions a proverb, found in Job 39 : 27–30, to illustrate what he had been saying in the former verses. In Luke 17 : 37, we find why he used this proverb. Christ has been

telling how he would divide his people from the wicked, and take one and leave the other. The disciples inquire, "Where, Lord?"—where will they be taken? Christ gives this answer, showing that where their interests and affections are, there they will be taken. If they look for and love his appearing, they "will be caught up to meet him in the air."—1 Thess. 4 : 17. Jesus had also said, "They shall come from the east and from the west, from the south and the north, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

This is the second time, in this discourse of our Lord, that he has led us down to the end of time. Once in the fourteenth verse, where he speaks of the universal promulgation of the Gospel as an omen of the end being near. Again, in the twenty-seventh verse, and gives other moral omens to instruct the church,— "false teachers" about Christ's coming, with their "*signs and wonders*," their "*Lo here and there*." All these things clearly indicate the end near; but,

"WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING?"

Verse 29.—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

As we have before stated, the "great tribula-

tion" ceased in the last century,— was "shortened for the elect's sake." Jesus now commences at that point to give a definite answer (to the church) to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"—Gentile age. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days." In the parallel passage, in Mark 13 : 24, "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light." There is no conflict in the language of the two evangelists, but a strengthening of the sense. One says, "*after the tribulation of those days,*" showing the days are *longer* than the tribulation. The other says, "But *IN THOSE DAYS, after that tribulation,* the sun shall be darkened," &c. We have stated our conviction that "those days" were the days allotted for the saints to be in the hand of Papacy, the twelve hundred and sixty, and that they commenced A. D. 538, and consequently ended A. D. 1798, when Berthier, a French general, took Rome, issued a proclamation declaring it to be a free republic, and released the prisoners, heretics, Protestants, and on Feb. 15th planted the tree of liberty. Thus, by force of arms, and by order of a foreign power, the deed that was *done* in the same manner twelve hundred and sixty years before, on the same month, was now *UNDONE*.

If those are the days intended by the Lord, then we are to look for the events which he pre-

dicts in the latter part "of those days." This was fulfilled, in part, to the letter, on the nineteenth of May, 1780, when the sun was supernaturally darkened from morning until evening, and into the night also. The facts and the date are now so well established in history there can be no room for doubt. There are also hundreds of living witnesses who saw the events and attest to the facts. We quote some extracts :

"The nineteenth of May, 1780, was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses. The birds were silent and disappeared. The fowls retired to roost. It was the general opinion that the day of judgment was at hand. The legislature of Connecticut was in session at Hartford, but, being unable to transact business, adjourned. A motion for adjournment was before the council, but when the opinion of Col. Danforth (of Stamford) was requested, he replied, 'I am against the adjournment. The day of judgment is either at hand, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for the adjournment; if it is, I wish to be found in the line of my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought.'"—*President Dwight, in Conn. His. Collections.*

"In the month of May, 1780, there was a very terrific dark day in New England, when all faces seemed to gather blackness, and the people were filled with fear. There was great distress in the village where Edward Lee lived, men's hearts failing them for fear that the judg-

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ment day was at hand," &c.— *Life of Edward Lee, of Mass.*

"In the dark day of May 19, 1780, the heavens were covered with a dense cloud for three or four hours. * * During this time the clouds were tinged with a yellowish or faint red, for hours, for which no satisfactory cause has been assigned. I stood and viewed the phenomenon, but had not any fear that the world was coming to an end."—*N. Webster, LL.D.*

There are many other records of this event, giving more detailed and remarkable accounts of it, among which are in *Gage's History of Rowley, Mass.*; *Stone's History of Beverly*; *Wm. Gordon, D.D., Hist. American Revolution*; *Sears' Guide to Knowledge, N. Y., &c.*

There have also been several other dark days in various parts of Christendom, in A. D. 1782, 1783, 1785 and 1789, but of much less magnitude; yet these several darkenings are probably required to fulfil the language as recorded by Luke 21 : 25 — "And there shall be SIGNS in the sun." There have also been seen other most singular signs in the sun, since the dark days.

"AND THE MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT."

The night of May 19, 1780. "The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving, at the time, that if every lumi-

nous body in the universe had been struck out of existence, the darkness could not be more complete. A sheet of white paper, held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."—*Rev. Mr. Tenney*, of Exeter, N. H.

The other histories, above quoted, of the dark day, also record the same account of the night as does Mr. Tenney, and while the moon was then within twelve hours of its full. It is certain that it could not be an eclipse, and also that the sun must be darkened on the other side of the globe, or the moon would have given some light on this side, if the atmosphere was dense.

"The night succeeding that day (May 19, 1780) was of such pitchy darkness that, in some instances, horses could not be compelled to leave the stable when wanted for service. About midnight the clouds were dispersed, and the moon and stars appeared with unimpaired brilliancy."—*Stone's History of Beverly*.

Could we have a more literal fulfilment of this part of the sign than is shown in these events? We think not.

"AND THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN."

The stars, in turn, have been made to speak in fulfilment of this declaration. It is true that history shows that stars have fallen at various times during the Christian dispensation; but from all that I have yet seen, nothing of this

kind occurred to attract any special notice until A. D. 1799, when they fell in such numbers as to cause special attention and investigation. From that point onward, several remarkable scenes of this celestial phenomenon have been witnessed, the most notable of which occurred on the night of November 13, 1833. I here quote an extract from the *Journal of Commerce*, N. Y., of an article written by Henry Dana Ward, and published Nov. 15, 1833.

* * “At the cry, ‘Look out of the window,’ I sprang from a deep sleep, and with wonder saw the east lighted up with the dawn and METEORS. The zenith, the north, and the west, also showed the falling stars, in the very image of one thing, and of only one, I ever heard of. I called to my wife to behold, and, while robing, she exclaimed, ‘See how the stars fall!’ I replied, ‘That is the wonder;’ and we felt in our hearts that it was a sign of the last days. For truly ‘the stars of heaven fell *unto the earth*, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.’—Rev. 6 : 13.

* * Yesterday this was literally fulfilled. The ancients understood, by *aster* in Greek and *stella* in Latin, the smaller lights of heaven. The refinement of modern astronomy has made the distinction between the *stars* of heaven and the *meteors* of heaven. Therefore the idea of the prophet, as expressed in the original Greek, was literally fulfilled in the phenomenon of yesterday, so as no man before yesterday had conceived to be

possible that it should be fulfilled. The immense size and distance of the planets and *fixed* stars, forbid the idea of *their* falling *unto the earth*. Larger bodies cannot fall in myriads unto a smaller body; but most of the planets are many times larger than our earth. They *cannot* fall unto the earth, but *these* fell towards it. And how did they fall? 'It rained fire,' says one; another, 'It was like a shower of fire;' another, 'It was like the large flakes of falling snow before a coming storm, or large drops of rain before a shower.' I admit their fitness for common accuracy, but they came far short of the accuracy of the figure used by the prophet. 'The stars of heaven fell unto the earth.' They were not sheets, or flakes, or drops of fire, but they were what the world understands by 'falling stars,' and one speaking to his fellow in the midst of the scene, would say, 'See how the stars fall!' And he who heard would not pause to correct the astronomy of the speaker, any more than he would be so precise as to reply, 'The sun does not move,' to one who should tell him 'The sun is rising.' "

The following is copied from the *Connecticut Observer* of Nov. 25, 1833:

"THE FALLING STARS.—The editor of the *Old Countryman* makes a very serious matter of the falling stars. He says: 'We pronounce the raining fire which we saw on Wednesday morning last an awful *type*—a sure *forerunner*—a merciful SIGN of that great and dreadful

day which the inhabitants of the earth will witness when the **SIXTH SEAL SHALL BE OPENED**. The time is just at hand described not only in the *New Testament*, but in the *Old*, and a more correct picture of a "*fig-tree casting its leaves when blown by a mighty wind*," it was not possible to behold.'

"And again: 'Many things *now* occurring upon the earth, tend to convince us that we are in the "**LATTER DAYS**."' This exhibition we deem to be a type of an awful day fast hurrying upon us. This is our sincere opinion, and what we think, we are not ashamed to tell. Men may, and have, called us enthusiastic. We care not if they call us fanatic and mad, so that we feel that they are mistaken. Fearing neither the face of human clay, man's arm, nor man's voice, while we obey human laws, and love and fear God, and have the evidence within that we are loved in return, we **WILL** go on our way rejoicing. Nor would we go alone. Hence we **WARN** all to turn to the Lord while **YET** he is near.'"

We give the following extracts from *Observations on Meteors*, by Prof. Olmstead, of Yale College, to show the nature and extent of this phenomenon:

"The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the **EARTH'S SURFACE**, from the middle of the Atlantic on the east, to the Pacific on the west, and from the northern coast of South America

to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north. The exhibition of shooting-stars was not only visible, but everywhere presented nearly one and the same appearance.

“The duration and maximum, or period of greatest display, were characterized by a similar uniformity. In nearly all places the meteors began to attract notice by their unusual frequency as early as eleven o’clock, and increased in numbers and splendor until about four o’clock, from which time they gradually declined; but were visible until lost in the light of day. The meteors did not fly at random over all parts of the sky, but appeared to emanate from a point in the constellation Leo, near a star called Gamma Leonis, in the bend of the sickle.

“I feel assured that this is no atmospheric or terrestrial phenomenon; but that these fiery meteors come to us from the *regions of space*, and reveal to us the existence of worlds of a nebulous or cometary nature, existing in the solar system, and forming constituent parts of that system. Nor are these conclusions built on mere hypothesis; but are necessary inferences from certain facts.

“Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13th, 1833, probably saw the GREATEST DISPLAY of *celestial fireworks that has ever been seen since the creation of the world*; or,

at least within the annals covered by the pages of history."

Such are some of the records of facts concerning the falling of the stars. Two of these extracts show how Bible students of twenty years ago looked at such signs. They saw in this event the hand of God fulfilling his word; they heard his voice in it, saying, The end is near, and they were ready to reëcho the sound.

Such a scene as this was expected by men of God before it came to pass. Notice the following from Thomas Burnet's "Theory of the Earth," published in London, A. D. 1697. Speaking of the signs that will precede the coming of Christ, he quotes Matt. 24: 29, and after speaking of the darkening of the sun and moon, he says: "The *last sign* we shall take notice of is that of the *falling stars*,— 'And the stars shall fall from heaven,' says our Saviour." He then shows that the *fixed* stars and *planets* cannot fall, and that the only ones that will ever fall will be the meteoric or *shooting stars*, and adds: "No doubt there will be all sorts of fiery meteors at that time; and amongst others, those called *falling stars*, which, though they are not considerable, singly, yet, if they were multiplied in great numbers, falling, as the prophet says, 'as *leaves* from the vine, or figs from the fig-tree,' they would make an *astonishing sight*." He says: "We need not look upon these things as hyperbolical and poetic strains, but as barefaced prophecies, and

things that will *literally* come to pass. *We are not to recede from the literal sense without necessity*, or where the nature of the subject will admit of a literal interpretation." All this has now come to pass, and shall we refuse to recognize the fulfilment of God's word, with such overwhelming testimony before our eyes?

But, should the objector seek to play upon terms, and say the fixed stars must fall to fulfil this, and not the meteoric stars, we ask what was it that went before the Wise Men of the East to the place where the infant Jesus lay? Was it a star? All answer Yes. The Scripture says Yes. So, also, are those of which we have spoken, and the text has been fulfilled.

Some have understood the language concerning the sun, moon and stars to be metaphoric, and to refer to kings and governments, or ecclesiastical bodies and agents. But the parallel passage, in Luke 21, fully exposes this error. He says: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; AND ON THE EARTH distress of nations with perplexity," etc. Here it is plain that the locality of these signs and events is not ON THE EARTH, except the last. We have now come to a point where we wish to ask the reader a candid question. Did such events as we have been bringing before you ever transpire before the destruction of Jerusalem? Have you evidence of it?

Let us take a fair look now at a theory, or congruous set of ideas, that blindfolds multitudes of

Christendom. 1st. The "great tribulation" they say refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. 2d. The signs in the sun, moon and stars (although "*immediately after*"), denote the destruction (after it has occurred). 3d. When these signs appear, then Christ was immediately to come with his angels to destroy Jerusalem (*which was already done*). Wonderful interpreters these! Their eloquence may equal that of Job's friends; but their theology is much worse. We should remember that truth is the only thing that will lead us in the way of righteousness. Error will only injure us.

"AND THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS SHALL
BE SHAKEN."

We should remember that our Lord is here speaking with special reference to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" He has spoken of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and now alludes to one that shall be "on the earth." This we now attempt to show. And, first, let me remark that the reason why so many consider that this expression can only be fulfilled when God "shakes heaven and earth, and all nations," etc., is because they make no distinction between heaven above and "the *powers* of heaven,"—two things entirely distinct in their nature and locations. There is a vast difference between GREAT BRITAIN and the possessions of

GREAT BRITAIN; between heaven and the powers of heaven. When Jesus comes, his voice will shake heaven and earth (see Heb. 12 : 26 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 16 ; 2 Pet. 3 : 10), and he will remove all things that can be shaken.

What is meant by heaven in its primary Bible use? See Gen. 1 : 8-20. It is the earth's atmosphere, the belt that surrounds the globe. In Matt. 24 : 31, "And he shall send his angels * * * to gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other." Campbell translates it from one extremity of the world to the other. Consequently, if the original word in these two texts, also in Mark 13 : 25, is the same, and can properly be rendered world, then "the powers of the *world* shall be shaken." It is evidently intended to teach that the powers on the earth's surface are to be shaken as another event to constitute "the *sign*" of Christ's coming. These are God's powers, although the administrations on earth are exceedingly corrupt, and violence and blood are the abhorring scenes that have always caused the righteous to mourn. Yet "God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." — Dan. 4 : 25. Paul declares to us, Rom. 13 : 1, 2, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." The abuse of that delegated power given to man is

another matter; but "the POWERS that be" are the *powers of heaven*,—"the ordinance of God." Still, if lingering doubts trouble any who are in the habit of believing God's word, the parallel passage in this discourse, recorded by Luke, 21: 25, 27, will, we think, forever settle the mind. He gives the result of this shaking of the powers before naming it. Thus, after saying "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," our attention is turned thus: "*and upon the earth* DISTRESS OF NATIONS WITH PERPLEXITY, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, FOR THE POWERS of heaven shall be shaken."

Here, then, the shaking of the powers produces what? "DISTRESS OF NATIONS WITH PERPLEXITY," causing "men's hearts to fail for looking after those things that are *coming* (not come) on the earth." By comparing scripture with scripture, "spiritual things with spiritual things," we get "the mind of Christ." Has this last event been, or is it being, fulfilled? Let the history of the past few years, and the voices that are daily borne to us from foreign lands by the breezes of the oceans, answer this question.

There was, it is true, a great rupture produced by the wars of the French revolution of 1789 to 1814. This was God's instrumentality to break the power of papacy, to open the door

for the universal spread of the Gospel. During that reform of civil government, nearly every king in Europe fled from his kingdom, as a writer has recently noticed: "The King of Portugal to Brazil; the King of Spain to France; the King of France to England; the Pope died in exile; the King of Sardinia fled to the island of Sardinia; the King of Naples to the island of the same name; the King of Austria left his capital, and the King of Prussia took shelter under Russia; the Emperor of all the Russians left Moscow to its fate, and Bonaparte himself fled to the island of Elba, and died a prisoner on St. Helena."

Here was a general routing of the rulers; and a great change took place which has never been reversed. At this juncture the great powers united their strength in what is called the "Holy Alliance," and said to the nations of earth, Be still! and they have been comparatively still, while the heralds of the cross have been doing their last work in the Gospel. But this stillness was not to continue forever. The winds of war were to be again let loose. "The powers of heaven" are to be shaken. Look at the world to-day in its political, financial, moral and religious embarrassments. No stability, no confidence. Every department of society unsettled. Revolution in everything. It is so with individuals, with associations, and especially so with nations, filling the earth with fear and perplexity. The sound has long been heard from

political seers — “The nations of Europe are like a heaving volcano, ready to burst any moment, and involve the world in a general war.”

For twenty years past there has been a general expectation of war on a more extensive scale than usual, and the nations have been preparing for it; although many religious ministers have tried to make them believe that universal peace was soon to smile on the nations. The many and wonderful inventions, and great improvements in weapons of war and war-ships, with other war apparatus now in possession of the nations, speak out their expectations with a voice not to be misunderstood.

After many years' endurance, the pent-up and burning fires of republican principles, resentment for aristocratic wrongs, a desire for revolution, the eruption of 1848 shook nearly every throne of Europe. France, Austria, Hungary, Prussia, Italy, Ireland, seemed to suffer the most of that shock. It was remarked by Canning, the prime minister of England a few years ago: “No observer of the times can fail to perceive that a mighty revolution is about to come upon the earth, that will shake it from pole to pole.”

How expressive of the present state of things is the language of Dr. Cox, in the following hymn:

“We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.

“ Hark ! the waking up of nations,
Gog and Magog, to the fray ;
Hark ! what soundeth ? is creation
Groaning for its latter day ?

“ Will ye play, then ; will ye dally
With your music and your wine ?
Up ! it is Jehovah’s rally ;
God’s own arm hath need of thine !

“ Hark ! the onset ! will ye fold your
Faith-clad arms in lazy lock ?
Up, O up, then, drowsy soldier !
Worlds are charging to the shock !

“ Worlds are charging — heaven beholding,
Thou hast but an hour to fight ;
Now, the blazoned cross unfolding,
On, right onward, for the fight ! ”

I will here give a few extracts to show the state of feeling which has existed previous to the present epoch :

“ Probably since the downfall of the Roman empire the world has never seen a year so eventful and distracting as 1848 ; it seemed like a century compressed into a lustrum. Never was there a year so distinguished *beyond all previous example* by the magnitude and multiplicity of its *political changes*, by the violence of the shock which it gave to the framework of European society. Thrones, which but yesterday seemed based upon the everlasting hills, were shattered in a day. Such were the strange phenomena of that marvellous era which took away

the breath of the beholder, which the journalist was unable to record, and which panting time toiled after in vain."—*Northern British Review*.

"This year (1852) brings with it uncommon apprehensions for the future. There is a *fearful looking for* of some great event. Great events are coming on the earth."—*Portland Inquirer*.

"The foundations of the *great political deep* seem to be breaking up."—*London Times*.

"There is an undefinable impression abroad upon all spirits of a coming crisis."—*London Episcopal Recorder*.

The above remarks were published in 1852. Since then the outbreak among the nations has rather occupied the minds of politicians, to learn the results. The present condition of the nations is known to some, while many seem to think it is of no importance to listen to the wail of the nations, not reflecting that the hand of God is in it; that it is the death-struggle and last groaning of creation. The vast empire of China is rent in pieces by revolution, and is now foaming like a boiling pot. Russia, another mighty empire, has risen up in anger, hungering and thirsting, and gone forth like the bear to seek his prey. Turkey, and especially the holy land, Judea, is his object. Turkey, Egypt, Circassia, France, England, Austria, Prussia, the German States, and some lesser ones, are involved in the mighty conflict now commenced. The spirit of rebellion, thirst for revolution, for

the abolition of slavery, for a republic indeed, is agitating the heart of the American people; while there is an influx from foreign lands of multitudes with different religions and customs, many of whom are pledged to a foreign ruler, the Pope of Rome. By all these the fires of a volcano are being fanned to an uncommon heat, and a destructive explosion must soon take place in this nation. Where is the guarantee for the future of the nations? On what promise can they depend? What ray of light shines upon the mutilated, broken fragments of the nations of earth? But to the people of God the prospect is brightening every hour.

Verse 30.—“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” Many of those who look for these events in the future, expect to see a distinct sign in heaven,—one that will convince all that the great day of God is at hand. This is quite natural and easy to believe, because all, and especially the wicked, desire it to be so. Instead of recognizing the fulfilment of God’s word in the events that occur, most men wish an ocular demonstration, a miraculous and astounding event, that would not tax their credence, but cause them to know. But this is not God’s method, especially in this matter of the day of the Lord. “As a snare shall it come;” “as a thief in the night.” The Lord will not remove the snare he has set for the wicked; they shall not understand.

The question under consideration is, “WHAT

SHALL BE the SIGN of thy coming?" In the twenty-ninth verse four distinct events are given as the answer, and these *four constitute the sign* of Christ's coming, or near approach.

The statement in the thirtieth verse is not a part of the answer to the question, but a statement that when the four events above-named shall have transpired, "then shall appear (or be manifest) the sign of the Son of man," or of his coming. First, the question is not plural, but in the singular; *sign*, not *a sign*, but *the sign*. These four events having been fulfilled, they clearly indicate that the Son of man is "near, even at the doors." Luke says, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Christ is coming for this purpose,—to redeem his people. In the extracts I have quoted, and many more that might be, it is seen that some of God's people did "lift up their heads and look up," at the first of these events.

But some will remark that the sign of the Son of man causes "all the tribes of the earth to mourn." To this we answer, it is not a necessary conclusion from the text, and Mark and Luke do not mention this expression; yet it is true that all the tribes of the earth are to mourn. But while this text does not assert the cause of their mourning, nor the point in the history where it commences, and other scriptures do clearly teach the cause and the chronological order, we are fully persuaded that the sign does

not cause the mourning. In Daniel, 12 : 1, 2, it is recorded that "Michael (Christ) stands up (or reigns) and a time of trouble" commences among the wicked "such as never was." Rev. 1 : 7— "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. 6 : 14-17, gives the same idea, as do also many other passages.

If it be argued still that the appearing of this sign is a distinct event, then, as the sign is not explained, we are not told what it is; and as it is to be the positive evidence by which the church are to know that Christ is near, even at the door, it must be in the word somewhere else; otherwise, if fulfilled, we should not know it, as we could not recognize it.

I for one do not expect another event to fulfil this text, and I will express myself in the language of another: "I awfully fear it is a device of the enemy to catch unwary souls, who, in expectation of another sign, may be neglecting a present preparation for his coming. To such I would lift my warning voice, and exhort them to make an immediate preparation for the coming of Christ as the next great event." The sign of the Son of man has appeared, and is now proclaiming Christ at the door.

We give the following criticism on the text by W. D. Cook:

"In answer to the question, 'What sign shall there be?' the Saviour, in the twenty-ninth

verse, enumerates certain supernatural appearances in the sun, moon and stars, and powers of the heavens, and, by a paraphrase of the first part of the thirtieth, declares that these supernatural appearances, *taken together*, shall constitute the 'sign of the Son of man in heaven.' In the Greek, *phanesetai*, in this place rendered 'shall appear,' is the third person singular, in the second future tense, of the *passive voice* of the verb '*phaino*,' which by Donnegan is defined to signify 'to bring to light, to show, to expose to view, to produce light, to give proof of, to appear, or to shine, *to appear clearly, to be manifest*, evident or proved,' &c.

"The sign of the Son of man is composed of parts, or features, like the human countenance, and may be aptly illustrated by the art of the portrait-painter in producing a likeness; first the outline, then the different features in a gradual succession. * * So in 1780, when the sun and moon were darkened, many were much frightened, and others were seriously impressed with the conviction that the day of judgment was imminent. But these were only two of the four leading features of the great countenance which were to be painted by the finger of the Almighty upon the outstretched heavens, as far above the control as they were above the comprehension and explanation of the infidel philosophers of the last days." Since then the other *two* have appeared, and the picture is filled, constituting "*the sign of the Son of man in heaven.*" Or,

if this is *not* the case, and the sign has *not appeared*, then no man has a right, from the scriptures of this discourse, to teach that Christ "is near, even at the door." For when all these things (that precede the event looked for) are fulfilled, "*then know*," &c.

Verse 30.—"And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

Campbell translates the whole passage thus: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and all the tribes of the land shall mourn WHEN THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING on the clouds of heaven with great majesty and power." To this we say, Amen! We long to see thee in the majesty of thy kingly power and glory. "Though the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing," still the Son of God is to be seen coming in his royal apparel. And though scepticism, infidelity, spiritualism, universalism, and all other false isms, combine to teach the contrary, or "other Gospel," yet Jesus will come, but not the same

"As once in lowly form he came;"

but "with power and great glory." He comes the same crucified, risen and immortal Son of God that said to doubting Thomas, "Put forth thy finger into the prints of the nails; thrust thy hand into my side, and be not faithless but believing;"—the same person that said to his disciples after his resurrection, "Behold my

hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”—Luke 24 : 39. Yes, he is coming “from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” And for what is he coming, dear reader? “To execute judgment upon all.” Yes, “To reward every man as his work shall be.” Have you thought of this in connection with yourself,—that you, too, are among the “*all*” to be judged? But you may argue that you shall die before that day comes. Suppose you do. “The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” Death will not screen you nor better your condition. If you are an humble follower of Christ, and “die in the Lord,” then at his coming you will come forth to eternal life; for “the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Verse 31.—“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Here we are again brought down to the end, being the third time, and each time the nature of the events so clearly stated in their various classes, that we may understand the truth if we wish it.

1st. In verse 14, the universal proclamation of the Gospel was to be a precursor of, and connected with, the END.

2d. In verse 24, the prevalence of false teachers about Christ's coming, with their "Lo, here, and there," their "signs and wonders," marks out the time connected with the END.

3d. In verse 29, the sun, moon, stars and shaking ("agitating" — *Murdock*) of the powers of the heavens, speak to us, as a third class of events, with greater emphasis than the former, constituting "the signal (*Murdock*) of the Son of man." This is now to be enforced by a parable.

Verse 32. — "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh."

Thus it is with the laws of nature; there are order and certainty in the accomplishment of the purposes of God. And as we may and do understand this simple law, and, if no other means afforded information about the approach of summer than "the fig-tree and all the trees," (*Luke*,) these indicate the season with the most positive assurance. No revoking this order; no chance to doubt about the season.

Verse 33. — "So LIKEWISE YE, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (He) is near, even at the door."

What is near, even at the door? Christ and the end of the world. This was the great theme aimed at in the discourse to this point. He has now told them the sign, — the various events that indicate his advent and the end, — and uses the

parable to set the matter beyond all doubt, and does not merely permit us to think or suppose what may next appear, but his language is in the form of a command; "THEN KNOW that it is near, even at the doors." It is as easy as to know when summer is near. It is an irrevocable law; and if it was essential for the *disciples* to "*read and understand*" the prophet Daniel, that they might escape the curse on Jerusalem (see verse 15), is it not as essential for *us* to *know* what our Lord has here commanded us to know? We believe it is.

Verse 34.—"Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

What things? His coming in "power and great glory," and sending his angels to gather his elect; a mighty work indeed, involving more than all things else.

"THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS."

What "generation" is not to pass "till all these things be fulfilled"? The one to whom Jesus was talking, say some. But facts, which we have noticed at length in this work, show conclusively that "all these things" *were not* fulfilled in the generation that conversed with Christ; and your judgment, your conscience, tells you they are not yet fulfilled. Moreover, when we attempt to teach you that Christ is soon to come, and that we can *know something* about it, your conscience, your judgment, *speaks out* in language that betrays you, and you quote, "Of that

day and hour knoweth no man," showing that you believe the event is yet future. Those acquainted with the original language tell us the Greek reads "*e genea aute* * — the same generation." If this be correct then it would read thus: "The same generation (which sees the signs) shall not pass till ALL these things be fulfilled." This generation now living have seen the sign, or "these things," and are destined to witness the coming of the Son of man. Jesus had led the minds of the disciples down the stream of time, noticing the events in succession, until he arrives at the sign, and gives its features, by which it may be known, and then adds, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." It could not be the generation in which Jesus was here in the flesh, for he said to them, Luke 11:29, "that no sign shall be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

God speaks by the mouth of David, Ps. 95:10 — "Forty years long was I grieved with THIS generation." It will be seen, by the connection, allusion was had to a generation many hundred years before David; a generation that provoked him in the wilderness. So, in this case, the mind is carried forward instead of backward, and located on the generation connected with the action, or scenery in discussion, by the speaker. We, then, my brethren, are near our eternal home — the kingdom of God. Some measure the term

* See also Dr. E. B. Elliot's Trans.: "That generation shall not have passed away," &c. *Time of the End*, p. 117.

"That same generation shall not pass away."

Penn's Trans.

generation by an expression of the Psalmist, "three score years and ten;" others, by a modern estimate, that thirty years is the average of human life. But I conceive, that the first chapter of Matthew gives the true rule.

Verse 35.—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The Lord has declared this in other places. Ps. 102 : 26; Isa. 51 : 6; also, 2 Pet. 3 : 10, &c. The heavens and earth are not to be annihilated, they are not to be destroyed, but decomposed, "melted," purified, "changed," as declared in Isa. 65 : 17; 66 : 22; Rev. 21 : 1, 27; and 2 Pet. 3 : 14.

Verse 36.—"But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Mark adds, "neither the Son." This text is thought to teach that "no man" will *ever know* anything about the time. If so, then angels, who are to be acting agents, and the Son, Christ, who is "to be the judge of quick and dead," are *not* to know anything about the time of this greatest of all events until it has taken place. Surely no sane man will rest on such an idea, after looking it in the face. But it is equally clear that it does not teach us that the DAY and HOUR will be known by us. The only difficulty or obscurity we can see in the text is what men throw upon it, in racking it to cause it to serve their favorite theories, on the one hand to *know nothing*, and, on the other, to *know everything*, or be "wise above what is written."

Give up the desire to prop up your own creeds, and all obscurity vanishes, and the text stands out in its native simplicity, teaching that the day and hour of this great event had not been revealed by the Father, while the thirty-third verse declares plainly what is revealed and should be known about it. The passage is by some eminent scholars rendered, "Of that day and hour MAKETH known no man," &c. This seems more easy and harmonious with other scriptures. We do not, however, believe that the day or hour will ever be known to the church until it arrives; a number of passages of Scripture are too clearly expressed on this point to be twisted out of place without great violence to all rule of Scripture interpretation, and good common sense. The attempt has often been made by erratic minds, and the results are before us. But "the times and seasons" are to be known and understood. Jesus told the disciples, when he was about to leave them, "It is not for *you* to know the times and seasons which *the* Father hath put in his own power. But *ye shall receive power* after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," &c. The Holy Ghost is to guide the church into all truth, revealed truth, of course. "What is revealed is for us and our children forever." But, says Paul, "We see in part"—"see through a glass darkly." We should not expect to know everything, in its fullest sense, in this world; yet God has sufficiently revealed his mind to us that "we are not in darkness, that that day

should overtake us as a thief." "Let us, therefore, watch and be sober."

Verses 37-39.—"But as the days of Noe were, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be," &c.

A picture of the condition of the mass of mankind is here drawn. How dark the features! The people will be like the generation before the flood, "while the ark was preparing." Hardened in sin, indifferent to the claims of God, careless about listening to warnings of danger, blinded by the cares and pleasures and riches of the world, an unbelieving and infidel race, "eating and drinking," "boasting that to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." "Marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And *knew not* until the flood came and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be."* What did they not know? They knew not that

* The attempt has been made upon this passage to extort from it a sentiment that is not in it. It is asserted that Noah preached definite time, and that the antediluvians perished because they did not believe time. Great stress is laid on the term, "as it was in the days of Noe," and it is asserted that Noah knew the time. To this we answer, the beasts also knew the time; an ark was built, a flood occurred, and only eight souls were saved. Consequently, if Noah and his knowledge, and the circumstances attending him, is the figure of these days, then we are to expect the same things in substance again. But, just take the passage from the rack, and it speaks for itself, or for Jesus, that the wicked would be in the same state of heart, infidel about the event until overtaken; and thus Jesus goes on to explain himself. He had told us what the righteous would know in verse thirty-three.

a flood was coming. They saw Noah building his ark, they heard his teaching for one hundred and twenty years, for he was "a preacher of righteousness." "He condemned the world with an overthrow." He believed just what God was pleased to reveal to him; it was enough. He obeyed, and escaped; they disbelieved, and perished. So also will it be with the generation at Christ's coming. Not that it is wrong to eat and drink, or to marry; but it is in *excess*, not regarding the rules of God, nor the events before them. Not believing what the Scriptures teach about the day of God, leaves them in a careless state of mind; the "heart becomes overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon them unawares."

Verses 40, 41.—"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left."

This is to be a great, a final, an eternal separation of the righteous from the wicked. O, what a scene must this be! "In a moment" of time, "in the twinkling of an eye;" two in the field, two in the mill, and elsewhere, attending to their various employments; but one is a slave to sin and self, the other a servant of God; probation ended, the trump of God sounds, the angels are there, the sleeping saints come forth incorruptible, the living saints changed to immortality, and the triumphant host rise to meet the Lord

in the air, while the wicked are left to be consumed by the fire of the great day.

Verses 42-44.—“ Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

This language is so plain that remarks on it would seem uncalled for, but from the fact that it has been on the rack, and terribly distorted. Watchfulness is enjoined on us because of danger. We are first apprised of the day of God being imminent—commanded to know it to be so; the case of the generation in which Noah lived is brought to enforce the idea of danger and of duty; the result of the event on both classes is given by the two in the field, two in the mill. We are to watch, because we “ know not what hour our Lord doth come.” The parable of the householder is given to enforce the duty of watchfulness. If he knows what watch the thief will come, he will be on his guard. So, as we are to know “ the times and seasons,” to “ know when Jesus is nigh, even at the doors,” to know the generation we live in is to meet this event, we are to be on the watch; “ for ye know not when the time is ”—the specific point. See Luke 17: 27 to 37. “ What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.” Watch constantly, be always on your guard. Watch-

ing signifies a preparation for the event, a waiting for it. The wicked will not watch, will not get ready. "If thou wilt not watch I will come on thee as a thief," says Jesus; and, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."—Luke 21 : 36.

Verses 45–47.—"Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

Here is a parable used to denote the work of Christ, as master of the household of faith (see Mark 13 : 34; Heb. 3 : 6; and 2 Cor. 10 : 8); leaving his house and committing the work of feeding his church to his servants—ministers of his Gospel. They are to "feed the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers." Such are the stewards of the mysteries of God; and "it is required of a steward that a man be found faithful." They are to "preach the word," and also to "study to show themselves approved unto God; workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly DIVIDING THE WORD of truth." After giving all the events, civil, moral, political, and celestial,

false teachers, and the final event — his coming — Christ now illustrates the character of, and the reward given to, the servants he employs in the work of the Gospel. “Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant?” It requires something more than energy, determination, activity and a heart to *do*, in order to be faithful in the transaction of business of any kind. There must be wisdom and knowledge, or the work will not be done properly. In the work of the Gospel, we are to study to know “the mind of Christ;” “search the Scriptures;” and if we “speak, we are to speak as the oracles of God.” Our teaching should not be “the words of men’s wisdom, but the wisdom which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” We are “to give meat in due season.” The terms “meat” and “milk” are used in Scripture to represent the doctrine of the Lord. Therefore, to give “meat in due season” is to teach truth, in its specific branches, each portion in its appropriate time, its proper connection and bearing on the generations of earth. In doing this, men of God have proclaimed a flood, a release from Egyptian bondage, captivity of Israel to Babylon, their release, the birth of the Messiah, his public manifestation and claims, his resurrection, and his ascension, with all the duties of men, growing out of these truths. These have been separate and distinct portions of God’s will to man, given at different times. Since then, other features of the Gospel, or of prophecy, have borne more fully on other generations. Thus, the delivering of the church into the hand of the Papacy, their

great tribulation, their release from it, and the proclamation of the immediate coming of the Lord. These have been prominent themes for the faithful and wise servants of God. And it should be remembered that each proclamation, or unfolding of truth, in its specific relations to generations, has its special claims, and teaches special duties connected with those truths. Thus, it was Noah's duty to prepare the ark; Lot's to flee from Sodom; Moses and his brethren must go out of Egypt; Caleb and Joshua must not fear the inhabitants of Canaan; Zedekiah was required to "go forth to the King of Babylon," and deliver himself and people up to him; Nehemiah was to return and build Jerusalem; John the Baptist was to preach a forthcoming Messiah, and the people were to believe his message; the seventy chosen ones were to proclaim the Messiah already come; the "twelve, who had companied with him all the while from his baptism till his resurrection," were to proclaim a risen Christ the Lord; and God required the people to believe these truths as unfolded. Consequently, since God has been fulfilling the prophetic predictions of the Gentile age, his hand is to be recognized in the work. It has been by the faithful, by those who "search for wisdom as for hid treasure," God has removed the seal from the visions of Daniel, and caused history to reflect the countenance of revelation. "Men have run to and fro, and knowledge has increased." The signs of the last days are noticed by many

of the faithful watchmen, and they have begun to teach the famishing and weary household, whose patience was so far exhausted that they were listening to the "Lo here, and lo there," that the Master is about to return to release them from the sorrows of mortality and bring them everlasting rest. They have commenced on their work, not as inspired prophets, nor as astrologers and dreamers, but as expositors of prophetic truth, as teachers of the Gospel, stewards of the mysteries of God.

"This Gospel of the kingdom," mentioned in the fourteenth verse, as I mentioned in a note under that text, appears to be a special message of the good news of the reign of Christ. John, the first twelve, the seventy, and Christ himself, went forth to proclaim to the Jews "the kingdom of God is at hand," prior to Christ's riding into Jerusalem, on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass, as King of Israel. John said, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As soon as John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, saying, "The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel."—Mark 1 : 14, 15. When Jesus gave them the message, it ran thus: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. 10 : 7. He told them, also, "Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The work was done; the entire nation was no-

tified that the kingdom was at hand and ready for their acceptance. It caused universal interest. They listened, deliberated or ridiculed, as they saw fit. He then presented himself at Jerusalem as their king, and was rejected. He pronounced their doom, and declared that "the kingdom shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof;" and in reference to his second coming, he declares that "*this Gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come." Not the Jewish nation, but *all* nations are to be notified of the coming reign,—are to hear the good news that "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." See Luke 21 : 31. Here Jesus says, after enumerating "the signs of his coming and the end of the world," "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the KINGDOM OF GOD is at hand."

They have seen and proclaimed it. While light and truth on all other subjects, both good and evil, have been shining more and more clearly, this all-important truth — this clear light — has produced another movement, which has called the attention of the multitudes to ponder upon the theme of Christ's second advent. Some of the servants of Christ engaged in this work, have been, in Asia, Joseph Wolf, and in Europe, Edward Irving, Edward Bickersteth, Morant Broch, Hugh M'Neil, Mr. Cunninghame, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Brooks, John Cuming, D.D., and

many others. In America, Joshua Spaulding, Wm. Miller, Mr. Rogers, Cox, Tyng, Charles Beecher, N. D. Lord, Imbrie, and many others, together with many able ministers of the sect now called Adventists. But all that these servants have believed and taught should not be considered meat, or truth; for they are mortal men, subject to err, and in many things have erred. But in the one great theme, that the Gentile times are about closing, and that Christ is about to make his second and personal advent to set up his everlasting kingdom on the renewed earth, there has been a general agreement. They have borne the same testimony that the prophetic Scriptures end about here,—that the signs of this dispensation are manifest.

Again. The message of the faithful and wise servants should not be confounded with all that has been and is being taught about the immediate coming of Christ; for there is much, very much error taught,—probably some of the greatest “fables,” and most “vain babblings,” that ever were taught; but such is *not* “meat in due season,” though it is thus branded. Religious doctrines are not to be judged by their mark, but by their merits. The cause of these “fables” and “vain babblings” is a want of wisdom in those who may have thought they were wise, and tried to be faithful. Many have gone to the work who were probably not called to the work. We, however, do not judge. But that the “meat in due season” represents the message of the

immediate coming of the Lord, is clearly proved by verses 48, 49 —“ But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.”

What inducement would religious teachers have to say, “My lord delayeth his coming,” unless some were teaching his immediate coming? But while one class are thus proclaiming in all lands this soul-stirring message, to arouse a slumbering church, and warn a guilty world, another class are seeking to bring this message and those who bear it into disrepute. They reject it, and try to make it odious in the eyes of community; call it bad names, reject the Scripture arguments on which it is based, deny the signs, and cast the believers out of their churches, and separate themselves from their society, and affirm that “Christ cannot come for one thousand years;” that “the world must be converted;” that “Christ will not come in our day,” &c., &c. By the influence of such teaching, the faithful servants, who watch for souls and are not hirelings, are made “the song of the drunkard,” and “a derision daily,” while the other class wear soft clothing and dwell in palaces and eat at kings’ tables, or are the fashionable and honorable of the land, and are found in the circles of pleasure, the halls of mirth, the parties of feasting, mingling with all classes of society, not to instruct them in the self-denying religion of the humble Jesus, but to unite with them in

gluttonous feasting on oysters, rich cake, sweet-meats, and other dainties,—to aid them in gambling and raffling, by the sham post-office, the grab-bag, the sliced ring-cake, &c. There is a similar religious feast going on this hour, within a few rods of the spot where I pen these remarks. These feasts, called “levees,” social assemblies, festivals, olios, &c., for carrying on religious operations, are of recent origin, and are a sign of the last days. They became prevalent just as fast as did the news of Christ’s soon coming, and those engaged in them have generally been the ones who have manifested the most hostility to the doctrine of Christ’s soon coming, and they have frequently made that subject the subject of ridicule under some false name, at their feasts and otherwheres, while they have derided and smitten their fellow-servants with the tongue.

I shall now give a few extracts of facts recorded, to show the fulfilment of this text. “In the winter of 1844, an infidel made a feast in Endfield, N. H., for the following dignitaries;—1st, the Congregationalist minister and his deacon; 2d, the Methodist minister and one of his leading members; 3d, the Universalist minister and one of his leading men; 4th, a brother infidel to be his companion. These eight sat down to a sumptuous feast, and then spent the evening joyously, and after the separation, the infidel said he never had a better time, and remarked, ‘We all agreed on Millerism.’”

Another, copied from their advertisement :

“ OLIO AND FAIR.

“ A Social Olio and Ladies' Fair, for the benefit of the Sabbath School, will be held in the Congregational church in Webster, on Sunday, Feb. 19th, at 6 o'clock, P. M. For the ENTERTAINMENT of the evening, Messrs. Covert and Dodge, the celebrated temperance minstrels from New York, and John F. Cole, lecturer from Boston, are engaged to instruct and AMUSE, with their temperance songs, GLEES, ANECDOTES and speeches.

“ Fruit, refreshments, &c., will be exposed for SALE by the ladies of the society, and the SOCIAL POST-OFFICE will be in operation.

“ Tickets for admission, twenty-five cents.

“ Webster, Feb. 13, 1844.”

This was a Sabbath affair, and *six* ministers were present to assist.

These are only specimens of hundreds that are held every year by the various churches, some more daring in their iniquity than others. Some of them being held in the most elegant and notable hotels in the cities, and tickets sold at the liquor-dealer's bar ; others in the fashionable houses of worship, where the ministers have labored to show that Christ cannot come for a long time yet. These have become matters of common occurrence, and they fulfil the text to the letter.

Some of the leading teachers of these churches

have written books entitled, "*The End of the World not yet*," "*Millerism Used Up for a Shilling*," and other titles to indicate "My Lord delayeth his coming," and in which the motives of Advent teachers have been questioned, their characters assailed, and they called speculators, and many unrighteous names; and these books have been sold at some of the church fairs. This spirit has spread far over the land, through all the veins of society. Ministers of the best talent and other qualifications have been refused ordination by their councils, after they had graduated from their schools, because they believed the second advent would occur before the millennium, and soon. Many of the most useful ministers have been expelled and dismissed from the churches, and others obliged to leave them, for no other reason than that they thus believed and taught. A great number of names and instances could be named. But all are not guilty of these things. God will be the judge; we are only applying the text to facts, to find its fulfilment.

But a fearful doom is mentioned in

Verses 50, 51.—"The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Such is to be the lot of the evil servants, who put off the evil day (not those who deny it),—

who say Christ is not coming at present, and begin to smite their fellows. It does not constitute a man an "evil servant" to reject the opinion of another respecting a point of time, nor to give his own opinion that the time is not yet fully arrived; but it is he who teaches it distant, and shows that he does not wish the return of his Master,—who is "eating and drinking *with* the drunken," becoming companions with them in parties of pleasure, and "smites his fellow-servants." What could there be introduced that is so blinding to the minds of watchmen as the doctrine that all *must* be converted before Christ can come? Those who believe thus cannot watch for Christ's coming. He is not watching,—not expecting Christ; and says our Lord, "If thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." O, the fearful doom of the unfaithful watchmen who will not see that the day of God is about to dawn, and who smite those who are looking for their Lord! They become friends of the world, enemies of God,—are suddenly overtaken, cut asunder, and perish forever with those who follow them.

Jesus having brought out many of the most remarkable events to occur in time, with the signs which were to indicate his approach, the duty of the church to "know when he is near, even at the doors," and having shown the condition of the last generation of the wicked by the case of the antediluvians, and having illustrated the character of the ministry of the last days by

the good and evil servants, and also given their fate, in which he goes over the Gentile age four times, either in whole or in part, to bring out the various classes of events to transpire; he now uses a parable to illustrate the general character of the church in relation to the prospect before them during the whole dispensation, and their action and interest in regard to his return.

Chap. 25: verses 1-12.—“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out’ (going out, margin). But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you. But go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you I know you not.’”

DIAGRAM.

† Matt. 24 : 3—5. For many shall come in my name, A. D. 1800, v. 14 end

A. D. 33.—Wars, Roman Empire broken, Papacy established, Broken, Gospel of the Kingdom,

Beginning of trouble, Nations fight, Saints delivered up, Iniquity abounds. end

Famines, Pestilence, &c., Saints hated, False teachers, Many deceived, Love waxes cold.

And this gospel of the kingdom * * preached for witness to all nations. v. 14 end

Roman army in Judea, Pagan and Papal persecutions, Crimes increase. v. 27 end

Jerusalem destroyed, Great tribulation, Days shortened.

Dark day and night, stars fall, A. D. 1780—1833 v. 31

*** v. 35

Immediately after, ☉ ** end

Sign of Son of Man in heaven.

Parable of fig-tree. v. 34 end

{ This generation, } v. 46—51
Good and evil servants. end

Mat. 25 : 1. Parable of wedding, Virgins go forth, Sleep. A cry. Trim lamps.

The Church goes forth, Papacy, Year-day system, Signs, Midnight cry. v. 12 end

A. D. 100 600 1500 1800

This is truly an interesting parable, big with meaning, and should attract our special attention; for we act a part in fulfilling this picture, and our destiny is here delineated. By becoming conversant with the language and use of Scripture, we may understand the proper application of this parable, especially if we are conversant with the history of the church.

The term "THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened," gives the chronology of its fulfilment,—its completion, its finish. It is when the Lord comes and "cuts asunder the evil servant, and appoints him his portion with the hypocrites." Then, also, the foolish virgins receive their doom. Here the picture is finished; the countenance is full, and gives the features and characteristics of "ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to" attend a wedding. In the parable is shadowed forth the invitation—the inducement to us as perishing sinners to come to the great feast prepared by our Saviour. In it, also, is a likeness of the travel of the church (here denominated "the kingdom of heaven"), and the final end they make.

Let us examine the figures used, and then we may know how to apply them. Other scriptures give light on this parable. A bridegroom is the leading subject of this scene. He provides the wedding-feast; invites the guests, and receives or rejects them. Let us examine the imagery and framework of this parable by a

reference to marriages in the East, and the application of the figure to the fact will be easy and natural. Such marriages were always celebrated at night. A bridegroom invites his friends to come to his house some time prior to the night of his wedding, that they may partake of his bounties and blessings while he is absent after the bride, and to be waiting his return, that they may be ready to unite with him and the company that attend him to enter the guest-chamber and enjoy the marriage-feast. They leave their occupations and their homes, and repair to his house and engage in his interests, taking their lamps, or rather torches, on which oil must be frequently poured to replenish the light.

The bridegroom leaves them in the care of his servants, while he repairs to the house of the bride to bring her on the night appointed, with other guests. On that night it often happens that his friends fall asleep before his approach, as they know not the hour. A watch is kept by the servants of the household. Signals of his coming at length appear. The porter gives the alarm to the slumbering virgins by a startling cry: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him!" It arouses them; they trim their lamps that they may be ready to enter the feast. All whose lamps are trimmed and burning enter in, and the door is shut. Those who come for admittance afterwards are not admitted on any plea whatever. Can we

now recognize any such features in the history of the church?

We find in the Scriptures that Christ is frequently represented as the bridegroom—in Isaiah, in the Gospels, and especially in the Apocalypse. See Matt. 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34, 35. “And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” Here, Christ is clearly represented as bridegroom while on earth and while absent. In connection with the above text, Christ says, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Those who obeyed his call, accepted his invitation, became his friends; for he says to them, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth. I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.”—John 15:14, 15. Among the “*all things*,” we hear him saying, “I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”—John 14:1, 3. Again: “For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants,”

* * “and commanded the porter to watch.”
— Mark 13 : 34.

Again : “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” — Luke 19 : 12. These facts are illustrated by the terms “virgins who went forth,” and the bridegroom who invited them. Paul uses the same figure, 2 Cor. 11 : 2 — “For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” The revelator also speaks of the church redeemed and standing on Mount Zion, and calls them “virgins.” — Rev. 14 : 4. The virgins go forth to the bridegroom’s house to wait his return. Christ also has a house, or what is represented by that term : “But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” — Heb. 3 : 6. The same figure is also used in Eph. 2 : 19. The church, then, is Christ’s house, which he left to go into a far country * * * and to return. He invited his guests while here, and told them the condition on which they would be received, and added : “If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” — John 14 : 23. This is to be fulfilled at Christ’s second advent, as is clearly shown in

Rev. 21 : 2 ; 3 : 23. The invitation stands good until the return of the Master. These promises, and many others of the same class, entered largely into the hope of the church in the days of the apostles ; so much so that they expected the return of the Master to celebrate the marriage in their day, and Paul writes to Thessalonica to correct them.— 2 Thess. 2 : 1–10. It has been the leading motive power to move sinners, and encourage saints in all the pilgrimage journey since. Indeed, they have no true hope without this. Ten virgins are mentioned as a number to represent the whole church. The parable being of Jewish character, so the number ten is Jewish. It was a rule among them that wherever there were ten Jews, there a synagogue should be built. This number constituted a church, and is taken to represent the whole Christian church. There were *two* classes,—the “ wise ” and “ foolish.” All took their lamps, showing that they all professed to be acquainted with the use of it. All go forth, showing that the same invitation called them forth, and they expect the same reception. But “ the wise ” prepared themselves with “ *oil* ; ” “ the foolish ” did not. What do the Scriptures teach the *lamp* to signify ? David says : “ Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”—Psa. 119 : 105. “ The entrance of thy word giveth light.”—Psalm 119 : 130. What does the oil signify ? “ God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness

above thy fellows." — Psa. 45 : 7. This is a prophecy of the descent of the Holy Spirit that came upon Christ. He promised to impart it to his church as their Comforter; and that promise has been verified.

But some will ask when the disciples began to go forth. To this I answer, they began to do so when they learned that Christ was the Messiah; and he calls them "children of the bride-chamber." Paul speaks of their going forth in his day. Hear him: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to WAIT for his Son from heaven." — 1 Thess. 1 : 9. Again: "For we through the Spirit WAIT for the hope of righteousness by faith." — Gal. 5 : 5. And again: "For the earnest expectation of the creature WAITETH for the manifestation of the sons of God." * * "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope." * * * "But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience WAIT for it." — Rom. 8 : 19-25. A large amount of Scripture might be brought to prove that the minds of all believers in the Gospel were turned to the second advent of Christ as the time of rest, of reward, the crowning event of all their hopes, when he would come to celebrate "the marriage-supper of the Lamb." —

Rev. 19 : 9. At all times, when the Gospel has been preached or believed in its purity, men have repented and taken the word of God (lamp), and received the Spirit of God (oil), and become the wise virgins; or, as Jesus says, in Matt. 7 : 24, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." All such have gone forth, and so have the others, called "foolish virgins," and "likened to the foolish man" (Matt. 7 : 27), with the hope of the things represented by the feast in Isa. 25 : 6-8, and Rev. 19 : 9.

In all the Gospel age those who have counted the cost and laid their foundations sure have "received the gift of the Holy Spirit,"—been standing ready for Christ's return. Others have gone forth with the word (lamp). They hear and do not; build on the sand; are not prepared. Yet they hope because they go forth; but they are destitute of "the spirit of Christ (oil), and are none of his." These are a graceless class, doomed to the dreadful disappointment of being shut out of the kingdom of God because "they bring no fruit to perfection." The church is recognized in Scripture as a unit; and the virgins in the parable represent classes of men, and not individual persons, so that the backsliding of some, and the death of generation after generation, do not affect the figure, while others come in to fill their places. But I am here met with the remark of some who have criticized my

former article on this subject, and who profess considerable historical scholarship, that "the church did not have the word of God (lamp) during about a thousand years, under the reign of Papacy." To such I answer, if you will obtain a book called "*Israel of the Alps*," an English print, translated from the French, in which a history of the Vaudois, or Waldenses, in the wilderness of Germany and France, during the papal tyranny, is given, you will learn that they not only had the Bible, but believed it, were familiar with it, and wrote out their articles of faith, which were much better than some of those believed at the present day. I was not aware that information was so limited on this point until recently.

The resurrection morn — the assemblage of the hosts of God from all lands, to enter the eternal rest, the kingdom of God — has been the beacon-light that has lit up the pathway of the church ever since Christ was here. They have pondered upon his sayings: "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall * * come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life."—John 5 : 29. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live (be raised to life); and whosoever liveth (until I come), and believeth in me, shall never die."—John 11 : 25, 26. They have read and rejoiced over the revelation of the mystery of which Paul speaks: "We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed * * at

the last trump,"—1 Cor. 15 : 51; and the other, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. * * For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thess. 4 : 16-18. These things have been treasured up in good and honest hearts by one class, and they have "brought forth fruit unto perfection," being mixed with faith. But the other class hear the word of God, and the "wicked one catcheth it away," or "persecution ariseth," or "the cares of this life," or the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and they are deluded, and have not the Spirit. More than eighteen hundred years have passed, and this hope is not yet realized. Long and afflictive has been the journey; perils from one quarter and from another, adversity and then prosperity, each fraught with temptations to give up the pursuit, to cease to look for the Master's return.

"WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT."

The condition of the church, here represented by slumbering and sleeping, is of course a moral one. So, then, the state shadowed forth by sleep

and slumber is a state of unconsciousness in regard to passing events which affect the measurement of time, of insensibility in regard to the nearness of the event for which they are waiting. They trust the watchmen to give the alarm,—to give due notice of the approach of the bridegroom. We shall look for the moral feature of this in the history of the church; but first the term “TARRY” demands our attention; for this term is used to signify the position Christ occupies in connection with his waiting church. We believe the term is here used in its primary sense, as it is in nearly all places in Scripture, as all may see who will examine. The primary meaning of the word, as given by Webster, is, “to stay, to abide, to continue, to lodge.” In the event of a wedding, the bridegroom goes for the bride; he stays, continues, abides, tarries, until the appointed time to return. His friends are apprised of the night, but not of the hour, or time of night. They depend on the signal of his approach; and while he continues, “stays,” they often fall asleep,—not in the street, or on the road, but in his house, where they had gone forth to wait his return. At length the sign of the retinue appears, and a cry is made, “Behold, he cometh; go ye out to meet him!” They arise and examine their lamps. No definite point of time being stated for the sign of his approach, no blame is attached for being asleep, nor does any evil arise from it; the evil is in not having oil to replenish the lamp.

As with the figure so is it with the body it represents. Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone to the Father "to receive a kingdom and dominion (Dan. 7 : 13, 14), and to return," not only with dominion, but with a city and a multitude of angels, who attend the heavenly Jerusalem, which, when adorned with the immortal saints, constitutes "the bride, the Lamb's wife." — Rev. 19 : 7 ; 21 : 9, 10. He is absent still ; he stays, abides with the Father as our advocate ; he "tarries," and the promise is yet unfulfilled. Some looked for him in Paul's day, as I have remarked ; others in the second and third centuries, while others looked for him during the reign of Papacy. Yes, and they longed to see him, too, and cried, "How long, O Lord, holy and true ?"

But he did not come ; he was to *tarry* "on his Father's throne until his enemies were made his footstool." Generation after generation studied the promise, and the signs of his coming, but these not having been fulfilled, they could not calculate its nearness. They could read the history of Papacy,—of its decline and death,—but the vision was "sealed up," and they could not use the measuring periods. Thus they were insensible of the time of the event for which they looked. Some of the watchmen noticed the events as they occurred, and saw the fulfilment of prophecy, and knew it was *not* time for the Master to return.

In due time God raised up Luther, and others

with him, to circulate the Bible, to preach the Gospel, that the spirit of Christ's mouth might be breathed on the "man of sin," to consume him unto the END.—2 Thess. 2. The word grew, and the invitation to the wedding,—the feast, the everlasting rest,—was extended far and wide; the friends of Christ multiplied and rejoiced in hope of his return. But again persecution rages for a time almost unlimited.

The fifth seal is opened (Rev. 6 : 9, 10), and with it the blood of the saints flows freely. Patience is nearly exhausted, and while they cry, "How long, O Lord?" they are told "to rest yet for a little season, until their brethren also should be killed." Jesus yet tarries, and the time is not yet. Again God gives power to his word; it affects the multitudes; they spread it about, and Antichrist faints under his trials.

During the Reformation, from A. D. 1525 to 1798, the church for the most part obtains a respite from her former troubles, and during this time, though she bleeds at every pore, she achieves, through God, a mighty victory over Papacy, and the "great tribulation" is stayed. In all this affliction, while the church formed a better acquaintance with the Scriptures than formerly, her eyes and heart were continually turned to the "coming again" of her Lord in judgment, to redeem her from this miserable world of persecution and death. But while she is being released from papal tribulation, Satan is forging false hopes, of a *flattering* character,

to allure her. Even before she is quite out of the fangs of the beast that drank her blood, her nerves weaken before the charmer. She is now at ease, and, complacently looking about, everything seems to favor her. A portion of her members seek other lovers than the Lord. Their sentiments change; the Gospel is corrupted by Protestants; faith is crippled; "the hope" is displaced and tarnished.

The false teachers to which we referred in remarking on chap. 24 : 11-25, arise in this part of the history, and by the new and false hopes introduced by Whitby, Swedenborg, Ann Lee, Universalists and others, strike a death-blow to the Gospel hope, wherever they are received.* For, by these systems, the coming of Christ, the first resurrection, the judgment, the Millennium, and reign of Christ,—all this is

* Also, the notion that Christians go to heaven at death, and enter upon their reward, has done more to eclipse the light of the true Gospel hope than any other.

When Trypho, a Jew, and Justin Martyr, one of the Christian fathers of the second century, were discussing the merits of the Christian faith, Trypho accused Christians of the heresy of believing they would go to heaven when they died. Justin Martyr answered, "If you find those called Christians who assert that on dying they go to heaven without a resurrection, count them heretics, not Christians."

The Christian belief in the second century concerning the state of the dead, is thus set forth by Dr. Gieseler: "Till then [namely, 'the first resurrection'], the souls of the departed were to be kept in the under-world (*hades*), and the opinion that they should be taken up into heaven immediately after death was considered a Gnostic heresy."—*Eccles. Hist.*, vol. 1, p. 167.

made to be a transitory affair, to be endured in this mortal state of sorrow and death. Ease and glory are held out where Christ taught toil and affliction.

By these systems, large masses of the church, from A. D. 1725 to 1820, and since, have been turned from *the hope*, and their hearts have waxed wanton from Christ. Although they had gone forth with Bible in hand to meet the bridegroom, they had nearly forgotten the promise of his return. Some remember it; but then they are doing a great work. The enemy of reform is now crushed (Papacy), Bible and Missionary Societies are multiplying, the church is growing, and they begin to feel very comfortable without the Master's return. Great stillness prevails; the beasts of the field are at rest (the four winds held,—Rev. 7 : 1, 2). Without, it is dark; it is late at night; the church have long waited; they know not the length of the time, and they become insensible of the nature and bearing of the passing events. Some of the watchmen are on the look-out; they noticed the opening events, and saw the fulfilment of prophecy in history.

The sixth seal is opened (Rev. 6 : 12), the great earthquake experienced, the tribulation passed, the sun and moon darkened, the dominion of Papacy taken away, "the time of the end" has come. The seal of Daniel's vision is removed; "many begin to run to and fro," knowledge increases; and, while it is midnight hour,

and great stillness, deep sleep on this all-important subject, those signs which were to be the harbingers of the coming Lord are seen by the longing gaze of the faithful watchmen. As they continue to look, faith gathers strength, hope is confirmed, and joy fills the heart. Voices now begin to be heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" It awakens the saints, it fills their hearts with gladness, and the sound reëchoes from heart to heart, from land to land, from church to church, in all countries, and awakens the attention of all professed Christians to inquire if the Master is really coming.

Such are some of the features of the church and action of the ministry signified by the "cry made at midnight," as it seems to me. I think this work of giving the alarm is the same as that of the "faithful and wise servant" in chap. 24 : 45, and commenced, probably, under the labors of Joseph Wolf, in Asia, A. D. 1820. It was more clearly announced by Edward Irving, in England and Scotland, A. D. 1822; and in Germany by Prof. Gaussen, about the same time. In America, the sound began by our beloved and much lamented brother, Wm. Miller, A. D. 1823, but more fully since 1831. These, with a large number of co-laborers, have been warning the church faithfully, in the various portions of the earth, that "the Lord is near, even at the door." And their work has not yet ended. This work has been done, *not* by their

dreams, their feelings, nor their vain imaginations, but by arguments drawn from the prophetic Scriptures and periods, showing by history their fulfilment, together with the signs mentioned by our Lord, by the opening of the seals (Rev. 6), sounding the trumpets (Rev. 8, 9), pouring out the vials (Rev. 16). All these speak in thunder tones that the day of God is at hand.

I will here quote the remarks of John Cuming, D.D., on this subject. He says:

“And so, when Christ comes the second time, there will precede his advent a cry, loudening and growing in fervor, in force, and in strength, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh!’ And it does seem to me that the cry is now heard. What is meant by the intense interest that is now felt in the study of prophecy,—intenser than has been felt for the last eighteen centuries? What is meant by the fact that people will read on that subject now, who looked upon it with contemptuous scorn a few years ago? What is meant by the rending and splitting of the whole social economy around us? We cannot open a paper,—we cannot hear the opinion of a statesman or a politician,—without being told that the aspect of the world at this moment is more ominous, more terrible, more appalling, than it was twelve, or eight, or six months ago. What is meant by that deep sensation of coming dread, that failure of men’s hearts, that fear of things coming on the earth; shattered colonies, ruined

estates, desolated property — all spots, except our own little island on the bosom of the deep, convulsed, agitated, rocked, unsettled? I believe the shout that comes from it all is, 'The bridegroom cometh.' There is never a voice from heaven that has not its echo on earth. Few can fail to notice the fact, that in increasing numbers of pulpits this cry is heard, and from various places is audibly uttered. It does appear to me that a voice like that premonitory cry which preceded the advent of Christ to suffer, is now heard in many lands, and from many preachers."— *Lectures on the Parables*, p. 368.

The parable of the fig-tree has been learned. The voice of the faithful servants has gone forth from east to west, and from north to south, and is still going by the living preacher, and by books, tracts, and papers, bearing the all-inspiring, soul-reviving tidings, "The kingdom of God is at hand." These notes of warning are now resounding in all lands. Professed Christians of all names are stirred by them, and for a time listen and startle at the thought. They turn to the Bible, or to their teachers, or some other source, to see if these things are so. Among the periodicals devoted to this subject, are, "The London Quarterly Journal of Prophecy," the "Theological and Literary Journal," by D. N. Lord, N. Y., the "Literalist," of Philadelphia, "Waymarks in the Wilderness," and the "Advent Herald," by J. V. Himes, Boston, Mass., with many others of minor importance. Among

the authors of able and important books, recently published, on this subject, are, Brock, Brooks, Elliott, Bickersteth, M'Neil, Cuming, of Europe, and Miller, Duffield, Ramsey, Charles Beecher, Imbrie, Lord, Whiting, Tyng, Campbell, Litch, Hill, Winthrop, Himes, Hale, Thomas, and others, whose learning and piety, intelligence and judgment, have placed them among the ablest of the countries. These are only a few of the many whose writings are now winging their way to every portion of Christendom, awakening the virgins with "the joyful sound, Behold, he cometh!" By such instrumentalities a class of devoted saints have been made glad, and with joy they now watch with eagerness for their soon coming King. The light of the lamp shines more clearly, the cry grows more distinct, and a more thorough preparation is being made by those who have faith in the message, and in God, its author. As early as 1842, publications on the immediate coming of Christ had been sent to every missionary station in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. From the "Irish Magazine," in 1821, we find this faith promulgated in Tartary by the Tartar priests. As early as 1844, we find that it is preached in Russia. "Commanders and sailors of our vessels to foreign ports tell us that they touch at no port where this message has not preceded them." But this is *not a specific time cry*. It is of a more general character, and takes a wider range, and has something more permanent for its

foundation. It stands on the evidence that the prophetic events to occur prior to the judgment HAVE ALL BEEN FULFILLED (excepting those immediately connected with it), in their chronological order, by which we "know that it is nigh, even at the doors." This wheel never turns backward. It is true that several have ventured to calculate the *precise* time for the ending of the prophetic periods and the coming of the Lord, and adduced evidence which they supposed was proof; and some have located *their message* on these given points, and confined *their labors* to them, teaching each *time* in turn to be "*the true cry* at midnight;" and, in connection, several times for the "*tarry*," to precede the cry, have been given; and those who were very excitable in their temperament, and others who are dogmatical in their disposition, have created some fanatical movements and improper practices. But these are some of the imperfections of mortal men, and should be overlooked; other generations and other denominations have suffered by them before us. Many anxious and truly pious hearts have hoped to see their Lord at each of these points; but all these *local cries* have failed, and those influenced by them have been as often disappointed; and some have made shipwreck of their faith, and gone to ruin, and some leaders have gone off with sectarian parties to other things. Such features are not found in the parable. No such disappointment is there marked. We, therefore, conclude that the TRUE

CRY at midnight is based on evidence drawn from the chronological fulfilment of prophecy, and the "signs." There will be no failure in this cry, and under it the virgins will continue to rise and trim their lamps. There are devoted Christians who have not yet been awakened by this message, whose hearts have not been penetrated by this gladdening cry. Let us, then, be careful not to mar the work we are called to perform. Let us see to it that *we* have oil in our vessels, that *our* lamps are trimmed and burning. When the bridegroom came, there was no time to obtain oil. So, when Jesus comes, there will be no time to obtain mercy and grace. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." Sinner, reflect upon this. "They that were ready." Are you putting off repentance? Do you hope for a better opportunity? O, back-slidden sons and daughters, who are destitute of the spirit of Christ, seeking to prepare yourselves without "submitting to the righteousness of God, but going about to establish your own;" you will be too late—Jesus will come suddenly—"the door will be shut." Then you will call for admittance, cry for mercy, plead for life, and will be answered by the righteous Judge, "I know you not." It is too late—the day of mercy is ended. Yes, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved." And let the righteous be on their guard; "take heed;" "be ye also ready."

Verse 13.—"Watch, therefore, for ye know

neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

At each time that the Saviour brings our minds down to the end of time he gives us the caution, "Watch ye, therefore." It indicates great danger; and the figure just used to show the end of each class is very impressive. This caution to "watch" is accompanied with the reason, "for ye know not the day, nor the hour." The terms "watch," and "ye know not," are both in the same tense.

Watching signifies the absence of full knowledge; it also signifies something more than to look for an event. It embraces seeking to be prepared to be ready for the event. Jesus goes on to give other features of his work, and to enforce on his disciples the duty of faithfulness, by another parable.

Verses 14 to 30.—"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey."

In the previous parable the church is called the kingdom of heaven. In this Christ is called the kingdom, as may be seen by referring to Mark 13: 34. This is the style of phraseology, frequently met with in Scripture, where a part is put for the whole. The kingdom is likened to a net cast into the sea. Here the Gospel is in-

tended. In another place the kingdom is said to be "righteousness and peace." These are the principles of the kingdom.

But Christ has in this parable likened himself to a man taking a far journey, that he may call our attention to the relation we sustain to him, the duty we owe to him, and the final account we must give to him, with the reward we shall receive of him. He has fully and clearly illustrated the meaning of the parable in what follows it.

1st. Christ is our Master; he has purchased us by his own blood, from sin and from bondage and death, that we should serve him, not as slaves, but as "the Lord's free men." He has a right to require obedience to his laws. 2d. We have nothing that we have not received of him. "We are not our own; we have been bought with a price, with the precious blood of Christ, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who has bought us," says Paul. "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." Also, "Unto every one of us is grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ."—Eph. 4 : 7. Again; "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall."—1 Cor. 12 : 7. Our gifts differ according to our ability. God has delivered to us all we have, that we may improve upon it, to the advancement of his cause. He has made the church his nursery to raise up a people for himself; and we are to be "laborers

together with God," to assist one another, to lead sinners to Christ. "Ye are the light of the world," says Christ; but all our light is received from God. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father in heaven." Not only are we to use our speaking, writing, and other intellectual gifts for our Master, to advance his cause, to rescue sinners from destruction, but all our substance, our wealth, our time and property, is from God, and should be at his control. We are only stewards, and shall be called to render account for using it. We are to "make to ourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, that when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations." In the parable, the one who received five talents, gained other five, and was rewarded; the one who received two, gained other two, and he was rewarded; and on each a blessing was pronounced for being good and faithful servants, and they entered into the joy of their lord, into possession of what was his, having been proved faithful. This is a clear representation of the experience of all faithful Christians, and of the reward that awaits them. The Lord looks for fruit from all his disciples, and he tells us (John 15 : 1-5) how it can be produced. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. * * * Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples." This fruit is not merely preaching or praying, talking or singing, although these

are all good and needful, when it is from the heart, and it is a part of our work. Yet it must be "not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Jesus gives us the idea of the fruit in the sequel.

But the servant that received the one talent deserves our notice. He receives it of his master, and, instead of being thankful that he is entrusted with such treasure, and the honor of laboring for his master, he "digs in the earth and hides his lord's money;" and at the time of reckoning, he discloses the reason of all this. He discovers that he has an obdurate heart, and is not sensible of his obligations to his master. But further, he brings severe charges against the character of his master. He pretends that he knew his character. "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." He next excuses himself, and feigns honesty. "And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine." Such is the character of multitudes of professed Christians, and this shadow is brought to illustrate them. They take the name of Christian, and make pretensions of being servants, but are careless about their obligations to Christ; they are unwilling to acknowledge his claims upon them. When they listen to the duties of Christianity, they say, as did many who attended his preaching when on earth, "These are hard sayings, who can bear them?" And, although

they try to maintain a profession, they reject the claims of Christ, and "draw nigh with their lips, and honor him with their mouths, while their hearts are far from him." They accuse Christ of requiring what is not just, of claiming what he has not given ability to do. They call themselves their own masters, and their gifts their own, their property and time their own. So, when Christ calls on them, "Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow turn not thou away," they have other uses for *their* money. When the command comes, "Feed the poor, clothe the naked," "I am not able." When required to visit the sick, and those in prison, and administer to their wants, "*My* time is all taken up in business." Consequently, when called upon to "go speak to that young man," or to bear a faithful testimony to the world of the grace of God, he has no ability, no gift. Thus, in a thousand ways, he slanders the character of Christ, denies his claims, refuses to occupy upon what God has given, only for *himself*, "in the earth;" and when he has done all he can for himself, and is about to die, he is ready to render back to God his gift without increase. "Thou wicked and slothful servant." This is his character. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This was the doom pronounced on the evil servants who smote their fellows.— Chap. 24: 48–51. They are the same class who do not learn wisdom; do not

give meat in due season. And this is to be the doom of all wicked and slothful servants, and all other wicked persons.

Christ now narrates in unmistakable terms the nature and manner of rewarding his servants, both the good and the evil, whom he had illustrated in the parable of the talents.

Verses 31-33.—“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left.”

Jesus has come to the point in his discourse touching the time when he takes the throne of his glory to reign. The Father had promised David that of the fruit of his body he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne. Psalm 132:11; Luke 1:32-69; Acts 2:29-31. It was expected he would claim that right when he was here in the flesh, especially as God had broken down the throne of David, and “removed the crown,” and said, in the days of Zechariah, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.”—Ezek. 21:26, 27. But the work of atonement, the office of priest, must first be fulfilled. And, as the Jews rejected him as their king, and “said, this is the heir, let us kill him and the inheritance shall be

ours." — Matt. 21 : 43. Jesus said unto them, "Therefore, I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." And for this purpose was the "Gospel of the kingdom" (which was rejected by the Jews) "to be preached to all nations," to call forth a righteous nation with which to establish the kingdom.

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness." — Isa. 32 : 1. Jesus has been to the Father, our advocate, our priest, where he is to remain "until his enemies are made his footstool." He is on his Father's throne; but he is heir to one of his own. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." — Rev. 3 : 21.

In Rev. 11 : 16-18, we are informed that our Lord takes possession of his kingdom, asserts his right to reign, when the seventh trump — "the last trump" — sounds, "at the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that he should give reward to the prophets, and them that fear his name, small and great, and destroy them that corrupt the earth." Consequently he comes not in humiliation, as before, but in glory — a conquering, reigning king, attended by all his holy angels. They have constantly been engaged in the welfare of men, "ministering to the heirs of salvation." — Heb. 1 : 14. He now gives them the honor of attending him in his glory, and of gathering his elect from every part of the globe.

— Matt. 24 : 31. He “descends from heaven with power and great glory.” The nations of earth are before him ; they have heard of him. He has been preached to them. The message of his reign and of his righteousness has been preached to them as a witness ; his mercy and merits freely offered to all, from the king to the beggar. He is the rightful lawgiver, and he has now come “to reward them according to their work.” Their cases are each decided. Character is formed in probationary life. Jesus says : “My word shall judge you in the last day.” Among all the nations only one nation is claimed by the King. It is “a nation bringing forth the fruits of his kingdom.” This nation is composed of members in all parts of earth, in all kingdoms, interspersed among all nations. But they are the children of a King. Peter calls them “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” — 1 Pet. 2 : 9. This nation is no longer to be mingled with other nations, to suffer shame and wrong, to be ruled by unrighteous laws, to be bought and sold, whipped, imprisoned and killed. Their Master was once abased for them, but is now exalted. They have been abased and humbled in choosing him as their “law-giver ;” and they are *now* to be exalted. The figure of a shepherd and his flock is used to give a graphic idea of the separation. In another place Christ says : “I am the good shepherd ; my sheep hear my voice and they follow me.” The separation is to be “as a shepherd divideth

his sheep from the goats.” In such a case the sheep are taken out from among the goats, and the goats left; so, in this case, the saints are taken up to meet the Lord in the air, and the wicked left to perish. “And he shall set the sheep on the right hand” — receive them into his care and exalt them; “but the goats on the left” — rejected and abased.

“INHERIT THE KINGDOM.”

Verse 34. — “Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

In all parts of the Scriptures the saints are promised a kingdom. “Fear not, little flock; for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” — Luke 12: 32. “The poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised them that love him.” — James 2: 5. Much dispute has been made about the nature of the kingdom, and time of its being given to the saints; and still more ignorance prevails about its locality. But the words of Christ ought to settle this question forever. It is when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. “THEN shall the King say * * inherit the kingdom.”

It is then that he takes possession of the kingdom himself. And it is at his second advent that all the saints are rewarded; not before, as all

Scripture argument bears the fullest testimony. "His reward is with him, and his work before him." But there is another consideration; it is the nature and location of the kingdom given.

"THE KINGDOM PREPARED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."

This subject has been, and still is, a great mystery to many. If God prepared a kingdom for his children so long ago, and now, at the expiration of many thousands of years, he gives it to them, where has it been? Of what is it composed? What is its nature?

The record given of God's work shows that "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth," and all other creatures, as is recorded in the first two chapters of Genesis. He pronounced them good. "There was not a man to till the ground." Consequently, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This was done. "And God blessed them. And God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Such was the privilege of the "First Adam." He was constituted king, to *reign* or have dominion over all the earth, and all animate creation. But he violated the command of his Creator, forfeited his right to reign, was driven from the

garden of Eden, and prevented "from eating also of the tree of life, lest he should live forever." Death followed as a consequence. Christ, the "Second Adam," "came to seek and to save that which was lost." He is "the seed of the woman" which is to bruise the serpent's head. God has said, "His dominion, also, shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."—Psalm 72 : 8. This is Christ's right. He has died to *redeem it*, as well as to redeem man. As we have before quoted, God has promised him "the throne of his father David." The Lord had established a kingdom in Israel, and David filled the throne for a time; and a succession of kings followed, until Zedekiah. It was then broken up, and offered to the Jews again by the Saviour, and rejected, as we have before noticed. The time having come to dispossess all usurpers and corrupters of the earth, to remove all pollution, to take off the curse, and fit it up for a righteous nation, an immortal race, he comes at the sounding of the seventh angel, takes possession, and, as he has represented and explained in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13 : 41-43), "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of HIS KINGDOM all things that offend, and THEM which do iniquity. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him

hear." Christ is to be our "everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." In Daniel 7 : 22-27, we are told the "time when the saints take the kingdom;" also, where it is: "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Thus the earth is the locality of "the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world." But it is to be renewed, as saith God (Psa. 104 : 30), and made new (Isa. 65 : 17; 2 Pet. 3 : 13; Rev. 21 : 1, 2-8); and the righteous, and they only, will possess it. They "inherit" it; and "their inheritance shall be forever." They are "joint-heirs with Christ." They have "overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony." See Matt. 5 : 5. The fruits of their righteousness are mentioned as the reason of their being introduced into such an inheritance.

Verses 35-40.—"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick and in prison, and ye visited me."

These are the fruits of Christianity. But the righteous ask when they had done such deeds to Christ. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In this

Jesus claims relationship with his saints, as in all his teachings. A deed of good or evil done to one of his disciples is done to him. "A cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple shall be rewarded." To do good to our fellow-men as we have opportunity is the chief duty of Christians. To say "Be ye warmed, and fed, and clothed," and not provide those things that are needful, is dead faith; and there is much of such. Those who have it are described and doomed in

Verses 41-45. — "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" He here claims again that his disciples are as himself; they had been in need, and were neglected. O, how many there are, and have been, who have despised and neglected the poor; have turned away from the needy, and shown partiality to the rich or honorable, or have lavished all their blessings on themselves! Dreadful is their end!

Verse 46. — "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

God has from the beginning declared his intention to punish those who break his law. "He will by no means acquit the guilty." Death was the sentence against the first Adam and his race for sin. It was executed. Christ, the second Adam, brings all up from the death incurred by the first. But for our own sins we must have pardon through the blood of Christ, by humbly

submitting to his cross, or experience the second death, be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power, where there is no blessedness, no life to come. "But the righteous into life eternal." This is the gift of God. "And this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Again: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus, death and life are set before us. Reader, which will you choose; life, with eternal joy in the kingdom of God, or eternal death and deprivation of all hope of reprieve? The day of rewards is at hand. Let us all beware. "Take heed, lest at any time our heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, or cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares."—Luke 21:34.

A FEW REFLECTIONS IN CONCLUSION.

We have traced down this prophetic discourse, which covers all time, from the days of our Lord's humiliation to the event of his coming to execute judgment upon all, and we fail to find an allusion to a time of universal peace and righteousness. Nay, more; the entire discourse tends to show that such a time is not to be expected in probation, as do also all his teachings. If there was to be a millennium in this life of mortality, is it at all likely that Christ would

have neglected to mention it in this most important discourse, and, also, in all his discourses? We must dissent from the modern notion of the world's conversion, and consider it a great error, while we believe the Scriptures, which assert that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" and that "the last days are perilous," and fraught with more danger than all former times. I will here insert a few extracts to show how this subject is viewed by careful observers.

Macaulay, late a member of the British cabinet, and a cool, sagacious observer, in reference to the progress of the principles of the Reformation, very properly remarks :

"We often hear it said that the world is constantly becoming more and more enlightened, and that this enlightening must be favorable to Protestantism, and unfavorable to Catholicism. We wish we could think so. But we see great reason to doubt whether this be a well-founded expectation. We see that, during the last two hundred and fifty years, the human mind has been to the highest degree active; that it has made great advances in every branch of natural philosophy; that it has produced innumerable inventions tending to promote the convenience of life; that medicine, surgery, chemistry, engineering, have been very greatly improved; that government, police and law, have been improved, though not quite to the same extent. Yet we

see that, during these two hundred and fifty years, *Protestantism has made no conquests worth speaking of. Nay, we believe that, as far as there has been a change, that change has been in favor of the church of Rome.* We cannot, therefore, feel confident that the progress of knowledge will necessarily be fatal to a system which has, to say the least, stood its ground in spite of the immense progress which knowledge has made since the days of Queen Elizabeth."

Tract No. 470, of the American Tract Society,—a premium tract on the "Training up Children for the Conversion of the World,"—does not present any evidence from the present signs of the times in support of the expectations of the world's evangelization, which are advocated in it. On the contrary, it says:

"As yet there is no evidence that these expectations are about to be realized. The present generation of Christians exhibit no evidence that they are about to rise to higher piety, and to discharge their hitherto neglected duty to the perishing world. We discover no such cheering indications in those who are coming upon the stage. *The young are not converted.* * * * And the young who do experience religion *are not rising to any higher piety, or putting forth more strenuous efforts, than their predecessors.* What, then," it asks, "is the ground to expect that the church will be better qualified to evangelize the world thirty years hence, than at the present, or will do any more to accomplish it?"

Facts, so far as the present condition of the young is concerned, compel the answer, none."

The Rev. H. Bonar, in the London *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, has truthfully said :

" We hear much of the knowledge of the age. Well ; but has not one of its own poets said, ' Knowledge comes, but *wisdom* lingers ' ? Yes, knowledge comes, but *wisdom* lingers ! Knowledge comes, but *goodness* lingers. Knowledge comes, but the world is as far as ever from peace and righteousness. Its wounds are not healed ; its tears do not cease to flow. Its crimes are not fewer ; its morals are not purer ; its diseases are as many and as fatal. Its nations are not more prosperous ; its kingdoms are not more stable ; its rulers are not more magnanimous ; its homes are not happier ; its ties of kindred or affection are not more blessed or lasting. The thorn still springs, and the brier spreads ; famine scorches its plains, and the pestilence envenoms the air ; the curse still blights creation, and the wilderness has not yet rejoiced or blossomed. Yet man is doing his utmost to set right the world, and God is allowing him to put forth all his efforts, more vigorously and more simultaneously than ever, in these last days. Nor can any Christian mind fail to look with intensest, though most painful interest, upon these vain endeavors. We know that they must fail. Man cannot deliver himself, nor regenerate this world. Reforms, republics, constitutions, congresses, change of dynasties, will not accomplish it. Art in every

form, science of every name, are bringing into play unheard-of energies for the improvement of this globe, and for giving man the complete empire of earth and air and sea. But the task is superhuman, and each new forth-putting of human strength or intellect is only proving this the more. And hence it is with such interest, as well as with such pity, that we look upon the generation around us, with its overwrought muscles, its over-tasked energies — toiling unresistingly, and yet failing in its mighty aim — the regeneration of a world.”

The evidences we have given, in connection with our exposition of these chapters, teach us that we are soon to meet Christ in judgment. It may come upon us at any day; we do not presume to determine definitely by the prophetic periods. On this we give the following.

Thomas Burnet says, in his *Theory of the Earth*,

“It was the received opinion of the primitive church, from the days of the apostles to the Council of Nice, that this earth would continue six thousand years, when the resurrection of the just, and conflagration of the earth, would usher in the millennium, and reign of Christ on earth.”

The same belief has been reëffirmed by many who have lived since that day; and, therefore, the opinion is entitled to grave consideration.

On the question of time in general, and in our interpretation of the prophetic periods, Professor

Bush, the most courteous of our opponents, says to us :

“ You are *sustained* by the *soundest exegesis*, as well as *fortified* by the high names of Mede, Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Faber, Scott, Keith, and a host of others, who have long since come to *substantially your conclusions* on this head. They *all agree* that the leading periods mentioned by Daniel and John *do actually expire about this age of the world.*”

It is difficult for the mind to conceive of an event of such magnitude as imminent; but this does not argue against its truthfulness. On this point the learned and Rev. E. B. Elliot, in his voluminous work on the Apocalypse, remarks :

“ With regard to *our present position*, we have been led, as the result of our investigations, to fix it at but a short time from the end of the now existing dispensation, and the expected second advent of Christ. This thought, when we seriously attempt to realize it, must be felt to be a very startling as well as a solemn one. And, for my own part, I confess to risings of doubt, and almost of scepticism, as I do so. Can it be that we are come so near to the day of the Son of man, that the generation now alive shall very possibly not have passed away before its fulfilment; yea, that even our own eyes may witness, without the intervention of death, that astonishing event of the consummation? The idea falls on my mind as almost incredible. The circumstance of anticipations having been so often

formed, quite erroneously, heretofore, of the proximity of the consummation — for example, in the apostolic age, before the destruction of Jerusalem, — then during the persecutions of Pagan Rome, — then upon the breaking up of the old Roman empire — then at the close of the tenth century, — then at and after the Reformation, — and, still later, even by writers of our own day, — I say, the circumstance of all these numerous anticipations having been formed and zealously promulgated of the imminence of the second advent, which, notwithstanding, have, by the event itself, been shown to be unfounded, strongly tends to confirm us in our doubts and incredulity. Yet, to rest in scepticism, simply and altogether upon such grounds, would be evidently bad philosophy. For these are causes that would operate *always*; and that would make us be saying, *up to the very eve and moment of the advent*, ‘Where is the promise of his coming?’ Our true wisdom is to test each link of the chain of evidence by which we have been led to our conclusion, and see whether it will bear the testing; to examine into the causes of previous demonstrated errors on the subject, and see whether we avoid them; finally, to consider whether the signs of the times now present be, in all the sundry points that prophecy points out, so peculiar as to warrant a measure of confidence in our inference such as was never warranted before. And, certainly, on doing this, it does

seem to me that the grounds of our conclusion are stable.”—*Horæ Apoc.*, pp. 215, 216.

We may not know precisely how near that event may be; but we may say, in the words of William Cunningham, Esq., of England:

“All the events of our own times,—the growing disorganization of the body politic,—the fears and expectations of men,—the deep persuasion of an impending convulsion in-rooted in every thinking mind, similar to the instincts of animal nature before the approach of the earthquake,—the solemn and awakening declarations of Scripture,—the clear and unequivocal voice of prophecy,—every sign, every promise, every testimony, unite in announcing his approach.”—*Fulness of Times*, p. 166.

Mr. Cunningham says, in another place:

“If we, who have watched every sign in the spiritual horizon for a long series of years, were now asked, ‘Is any sign of His coming yet unaccomplished?’—we should be constrained to answer, ‘To our view, not one sign remains unaccomplished.’ If we were further asked, ‘Shall He come this year?’—our answer would be, ‘We know not; but this much we know and believe, *that He is at hand, even at the door.*’”—*Visions*, p. 100.

Such is the faith of some of the watchmen and many of the flock of God. Let us, then, dear brethren, see that WE STAND READY continually, and enter into rest when Jesus comes. To the watchmen I will only give the language of

the Rev. Hugh M'Neil, in his address to the clergy: "My reverend brethren, watch, *preach the coming of Jesus* — I charge you, in the name our coming Master, *preach the coming of Jesus* — solemnly and affectionately in the name of God, I charge you, *preach the coming of Jesus*. 'Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.' Take care — 'What I say unto you, I say unto all — watch!' "

BOOK NOTICES.

A TREATISE ON THE 24th AND 25th CHAPTERS OF MATTHEW.

BY I. C. WELLCOME.

From the Prophetic Messenger, Ill.

“These chapters, considered in the relation they sustain to the present time, become to the student of prophecy the subject of most interesting study. And such they are made to whoever carefully reads this treatise. * * * The work, we think, a valuable one, exhibiting much careful thought and painstaking in the collection of very many important facts that are just what is needed now. We should like to see this book in the hands of every student of prophecy in the world, and shall do what we consistently can to circulate it in the West.”

From Eld. H. F. Hill, Genesee, N. Y., Author of “The Saints’ Inheritance.”

“Your little book (Treatise on Matt. 24th and 25th) I received and read with much pleasure. I think it well calculated to do good. I pray that your effort to advance the truth may be crowned with much success.

“Very truly yours, H. F. HILL.”

*From Eld. H. S. Hastings, Peace Dale, R. I., Editor of
“The Voice of the Church.”*

* * * “I think favorably of your book as a general thing. I think it will do good.

“I remain yours, H. S. HASTINGS.”

From Eld. E. Crowell, Holden, Mass.

“Wellcome’s Treatise on the 24th and 25th of Matthew.— This little work, it seems to me, is quite timely, though I almost regret it did not appear sooner. The work is well arranged, modest in its pretensions, and free from dogmatism, yet it is clear and plain in its position and conclusions.

“There are some of us who may be inclined to think too little in regard to the signs of this time. * * *

“This work guards against the extremes of being wise above what is written, and absolute know-nothingism in regard to the signs of the times, * * * though some of us may differ from the author in some of his expositions ; but who is the author from whom we do not differ in some things ? I hope it may have a wide circulation. It is worthy a place in any Bible student’s library. E. C.”

From A. Chase, Jr., Lawrence, Mass.

“SEPT. 13, 1855.

“I have just finished reading Bro. Wellcome’s little book on the 24th and 25th of Matthew, which, I feel constrained to say, throws the most light on those two chapters of anything I have ever read or heard. * * It is as well adapted to the unbeliever as to the believer, to the unconverted as to the converted. Avail yourselves of the work. Read it, and lend it to your neighbors, — give it an extended circulation ; it will strengthen your mind, and perhaps convict them of the truth.

A. CHASE, JR.”

